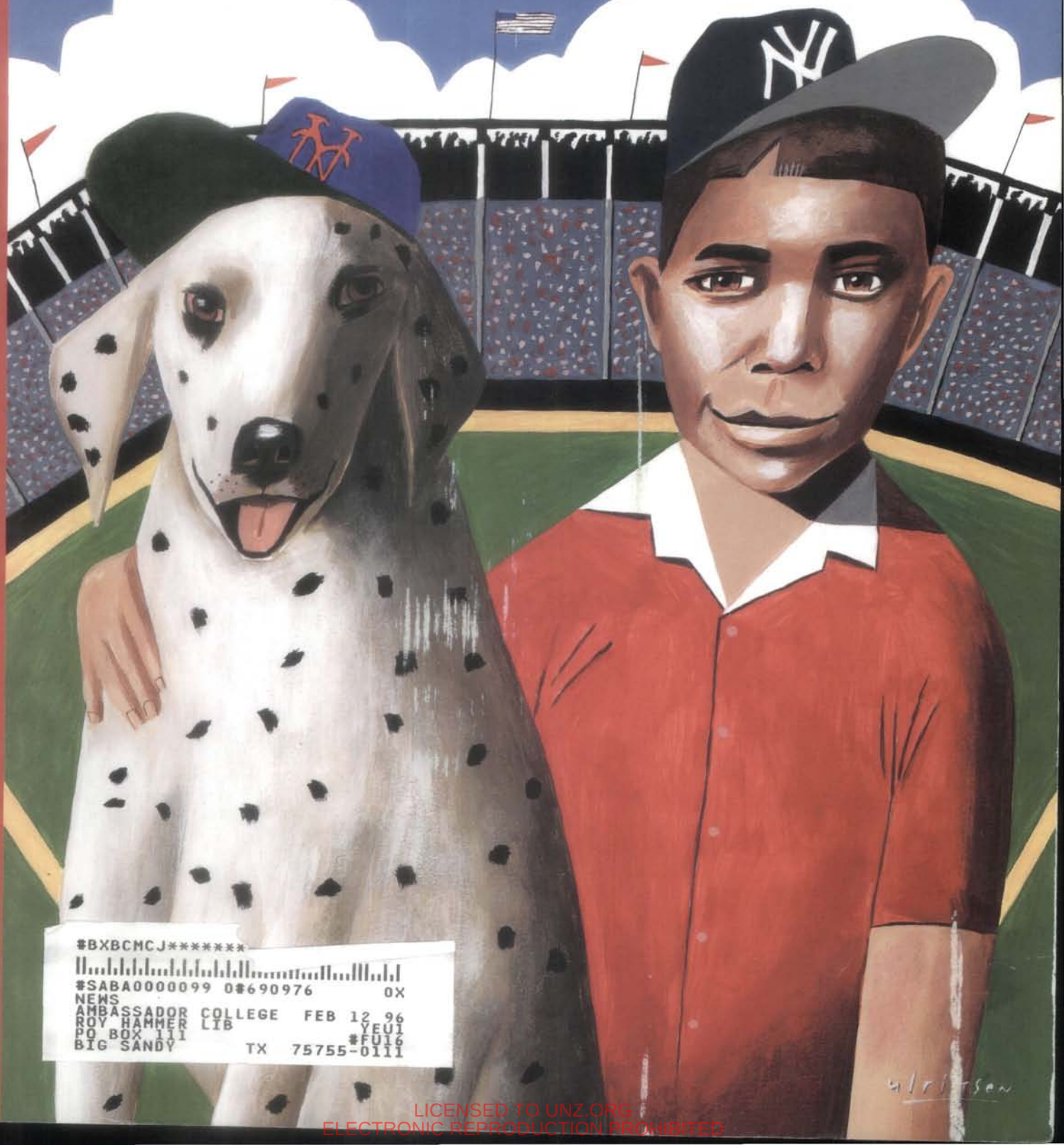
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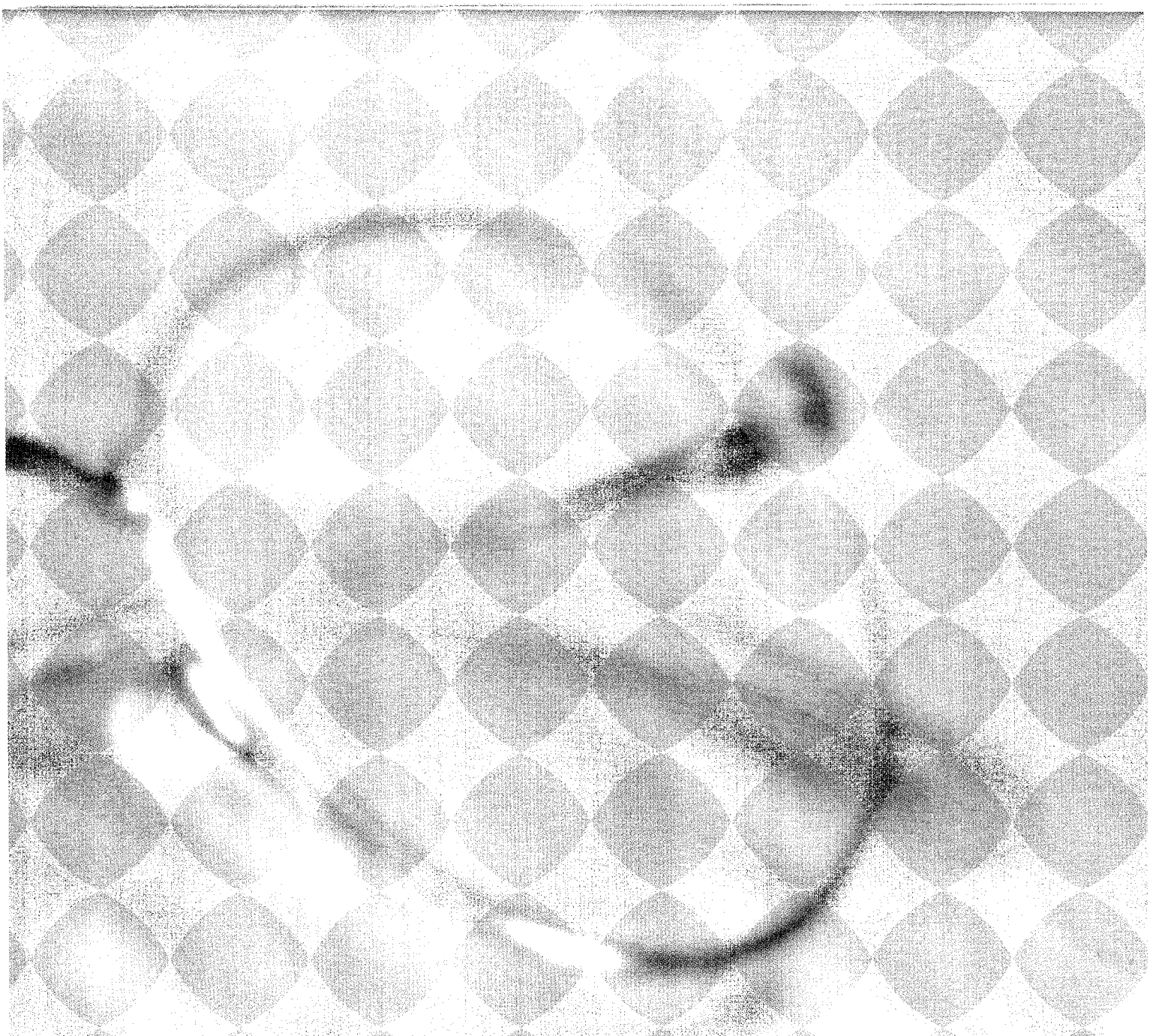


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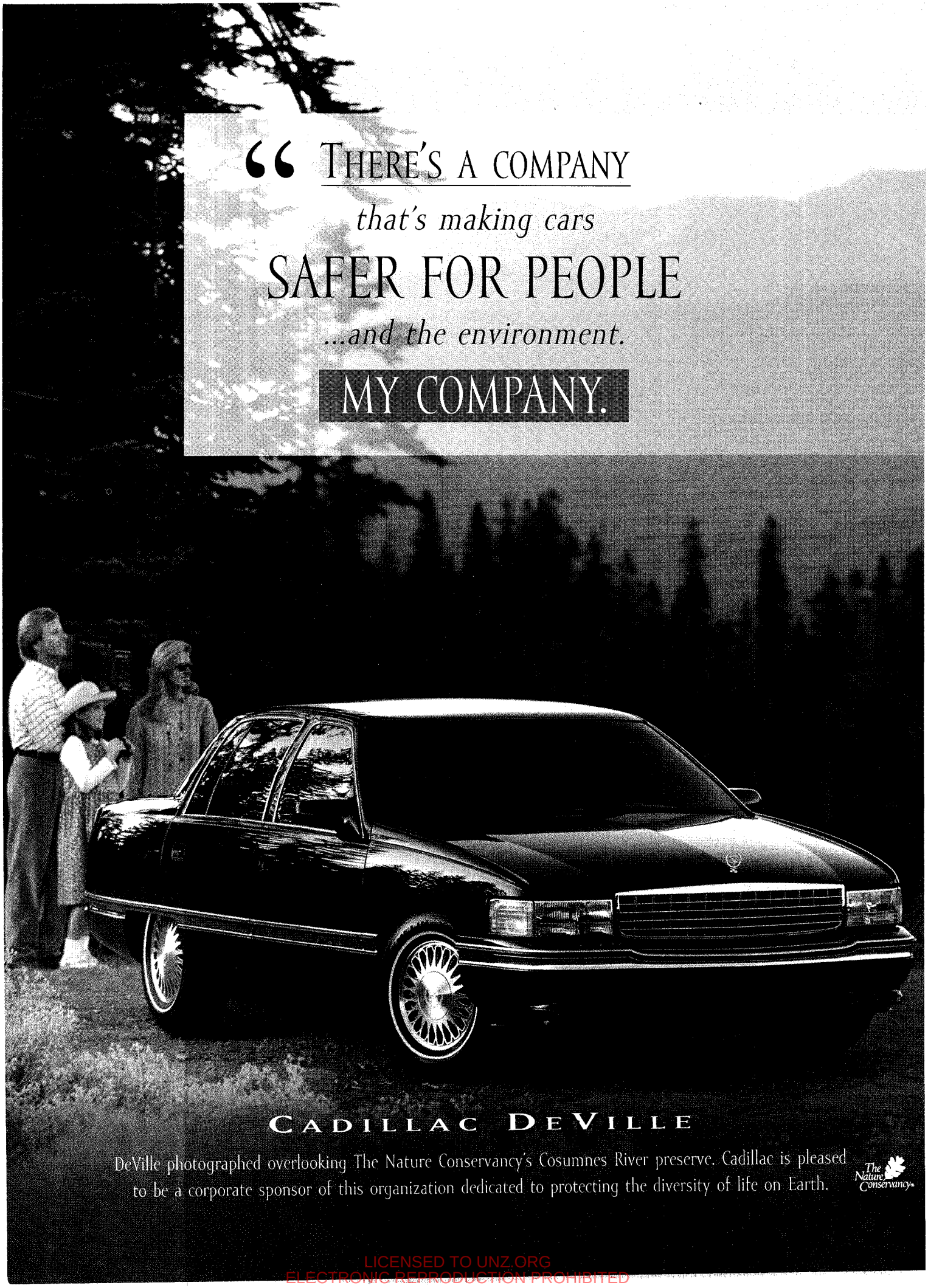


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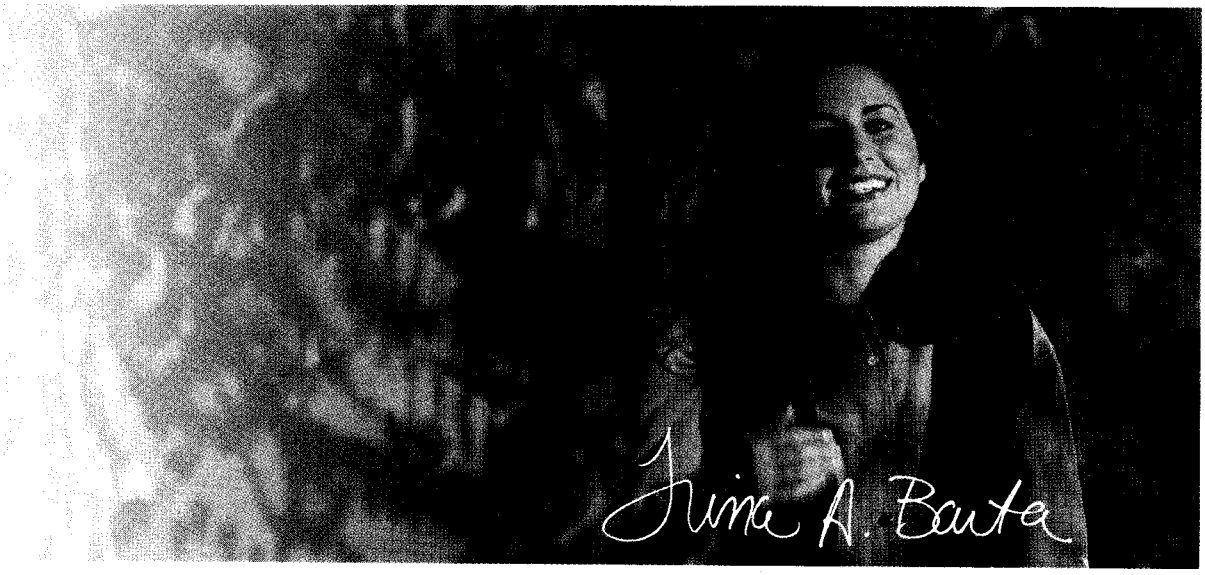
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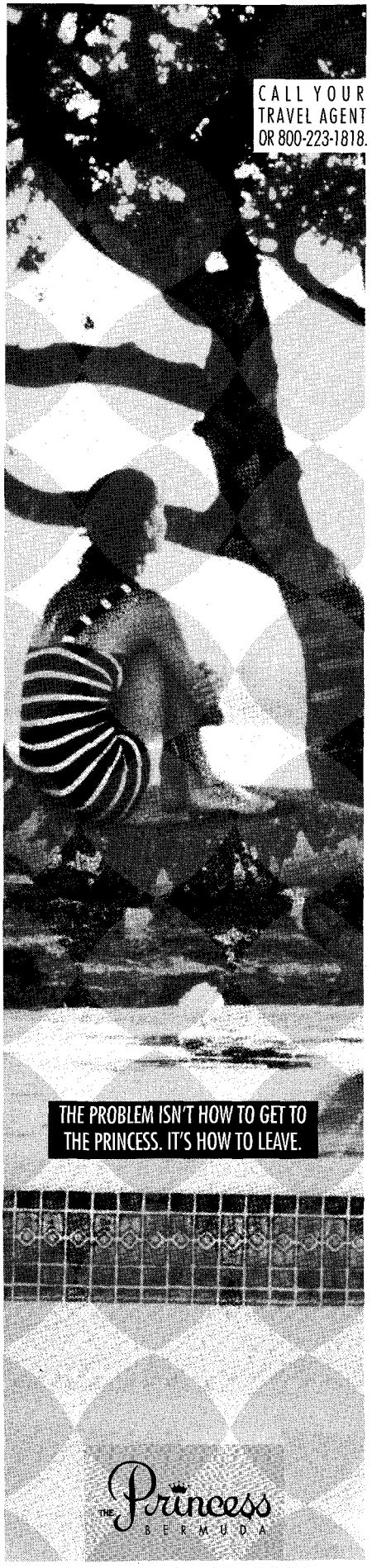
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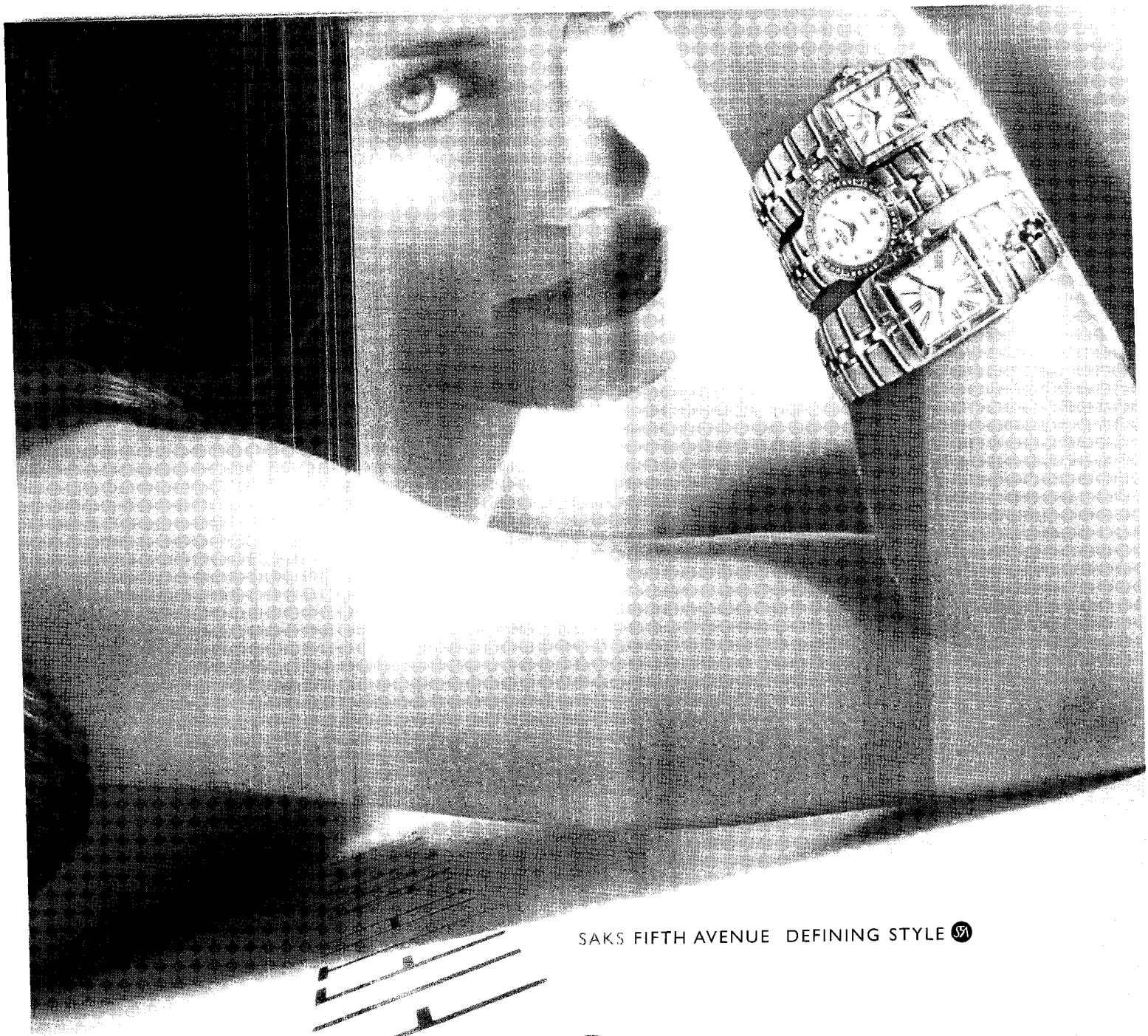
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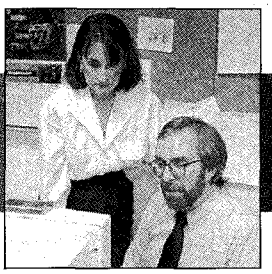
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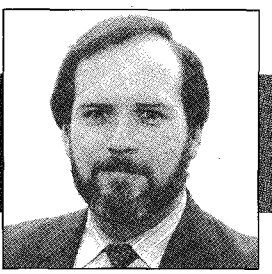
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THE FLAT TAX SOCIETY

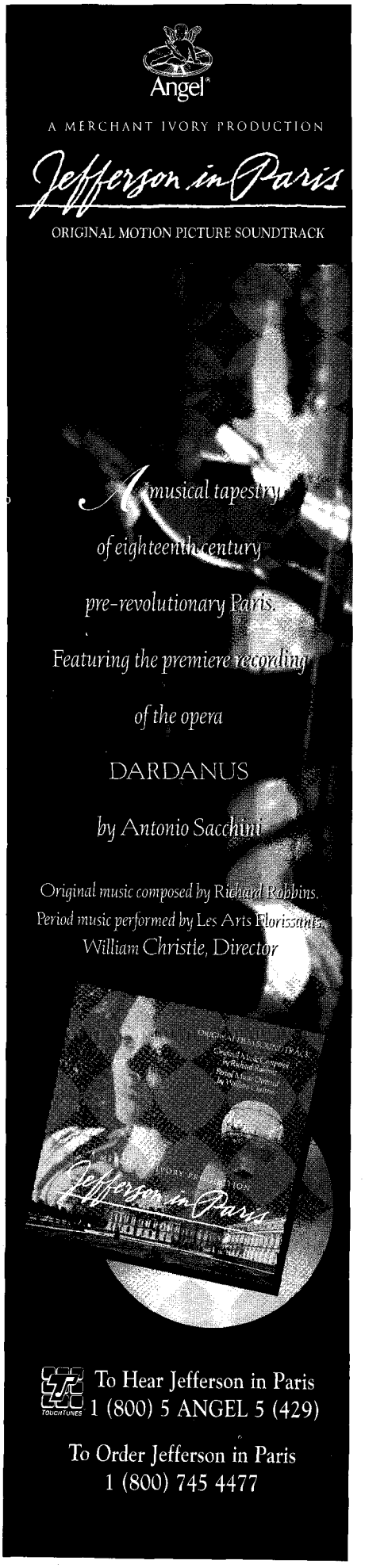
Guess who'd benefit from the latest policy fad?

PROPONENTS of a "flat tax"—this season's suddenly hot policy fad—purposely confuse three different issues. One is tax simplification. The current tax code is full of deductions, credits, and loopholes. These make it dauntingly complicated, and leave many people with the embittering conviction that others are getting away with something. A tax system without such furbelows would be simpler and seem fairer. It could also give taxpayers lower rates and still raise just as much money as the current system.

A second issue is progressivity. The currrent system taxes higher incomes at higher marginal rates. Under a flat tax, there would be a single marginal rate: above the basic personal exemptions, the percentage tax on everyone's income would be the same. Does fairness dictate that everyone should pay about the same fraction of his or her income in taxes, or does fairness dictate that people with higher incomes should pay a larger fraction? That is the progressivity debate. But there is no logical connection between progressivity and simplicity. Progressive tax rates aren't what make the tax forms complicated. It would be easy to design a tax system with fewer deductions and lower over-all rates which still retained different tax rates for different income levels. That's what Congress did in the 1986 tax reform: it closed some loopholes and lowered tax rates, while making the system effectively more progressive, not less so.

The third issue is the over-all level of taxes. Dick Armey, the House Majority Leader, claims that his flat-tax plan would reduce taxes for virtually everybody. With a flat rate of seventeen per cent—far lower than today's top rate of close to forty per cent—and no tax whatever on income derived from dividends, interest, or capital gains, Armey's plan would unquestionably reduce the taxes paid by high-income people. Armey would also enlarge the basic exemptions, wiping out income taxes completely for families with yearly incomes below about thirty-six thousand dollars. But if taxes are to go down at the bottom and down at the top how is it possible that the middle won't get socked? Answer: Armey's system would raise far less revenue than the current one—a hundred and

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"He's, like, 'To be or not to be,' and I'm, like, 'Get a life.'"

• •

eighty-six billion dollars a year less, according to the Treasury.

Armey disputes that figure, but he makes no bones about the fact that his proposed tax reform is also a tax cut. He says that the government must make do with less. Naturally, he has not detailed exactly *how* the government should make do with less. But let us suppose that Armey actually could come up with spending cuts amounting to a hundred and eighty billion dollars a year. This would have to be on top of the cuts of something like two hundred billion a year that the Republicans are already committed to in order to balance the budget—cuts they also have so far failed to specify. Suppose, in other words, that the Republican vision of smaller government is sincere, and could be achieved. This would still have nothing whatever to do with the merits, if any, of a flat tax. You could just as easily give everyone a tax cut under the current system, or design a simplified system that used progressive rates to raise the few remaining pennies needed to run the government.

The purpose of muddling these three issues—simplification, progressivity, and the over-all tax burden—is obvious. It is a way to get middle-class political support for what amounts to a huge tax reduction for the rich. People are in favor of tax simplification, and, of course, they are in favor of a tax cut. But are they in favor of ending progressivity? There is no reason to think so, and good reason to think otherwise.

In 1992, Bill Clinton campaigned on a promise to make the tax code *more* progressive, by raising the top marginal rate, and in 1993 he did it. In 1994, the Republicans inveighed ferociously, in general terms, against "Clinton's tax increase." But, interestingly, repeal of those top-rate increases (which constituted the bulk of Clinton's tax hike) was not even part of the Contract with America. Why not? Because those particular tax increases were widely popular, and still are.

The case for progressivity is simple. Taxes hurt less at higher incomes. A banker's thirty-nine per cent is surely not more onerous, in human terms, than a hospital orderly's fifteen per cent (plus seven and a half per cent for Social Security). Also, affluent people have enjoyed the blessings of this country disproportionately. They may (or may not) have achieved their good fortune through hard work and other virtuous activities, but few of them could honestly deny some credit to other people, to society, to simple luck. It is not "class warfare" or "hatred of the rich" to say that those who have enjoyed society's blessings disproportionately should bear a disproportionate share of whatever communal burden society decides to take on.

Anyway, Dick Armey's so-called flat tax isn't flat, since it would exempt investment income. It would not merely end progressivity, it would make the tax code regressive: richer taxpayers, on balance, would pay a smaller fraction of their incomes. Other Republican proposals, such as those of Senator Richard Lugar and House Ways and Means Chairman Bill Archer to switch from taxing income to taxing consumption, would have the same effect.

It is often said that money saved, unlike money spent, is taxed twice: once when it is earned initially and again on the profit from saving it. That statement is mistaken. Two separate economic decisions are involved: the decision to forgo leisure by working and the decision to forgo consumption by saving. All taxation discourages the activity being taxed. For any given level of desired tax revenue, though, reducing the burden on the decision to save means increasing the burden on the decision to work.

But then, this is all theology. In real life, American tax levels are already lower than those of any other advanced industrial country. In real life, most investment capital was never wage income and so was never taxed even once. And in real life a dollar from a dividend check looks just like a dollar from a wage check, whatever their differences to conservative metaphysicians.

People say they want a simpler tax system. But how many want it enough to see their own taxes go up as a result? To judge from the way advocates of a flat tax try to camouflage its effects, that question answers itself. —MICHAEL KINSLEY

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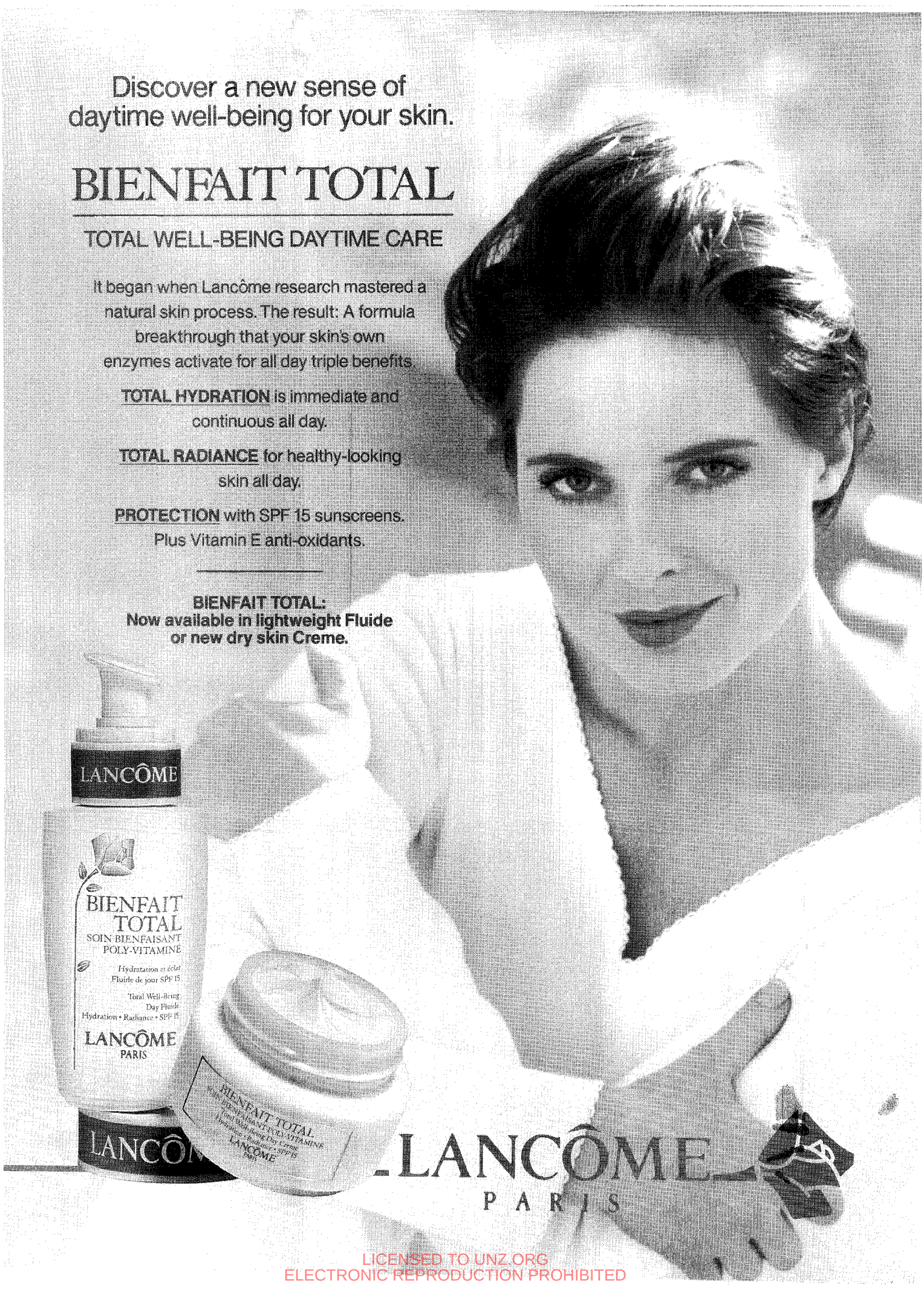
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SPEAKING UP FOR A.A.

"A.A. at the Crossroads" (by Andrew Delbanco and Thomas Delbanco, March 20th) had a serious gap. The miracle of Alcoholics Anonymous wasn't some kind of spontaneous combustion but an inspired outgrowth of the Oxford Group, a lay religious movement of the nineteen-twenties and thirties. I attended Oxford Group meetings with Bill Wilson, who was part of that movement for six months before he met Bob Smith, another O.G. veteran. The Delbancos remark on the fact that some of the ideas of A.A. are similar to those espoused by the nineteenth-century psychologist William James and the eighteenth-century theologian Jonathan Edwards. But the two people who really gave Wilson and Smith their tools were Frank Buchman, the founder of the Oxford Group (now known as Moral Re-Armament), and one of his lieutenants, the Reverend Dr. Samuel Shoemaker. The latter was Bill Wilson's spiritual mentor, and Bill always referred to him as his chief source. It was from the O.G. that Wilson and Smith discovered the life-changing mechanisms they brilliantly codified into the Twelve Steps and marketed for the benefit of millions.

It seems impossible that the Delbancos did not run across the Oxford Group. They even quote the famous telephoned self-introduction by Bill Wilson from the Akron hotel lobby: "I am a rum-hound from New York." The source of the quote is the person who was on the other end of the line, Henrietta Seiberling. She always maintained that Wilson said he was "a rum-hound from the Oxford Group in New York." To leave out the O.G. is like saying that the Ford Motor Company began in 1927 with the Model A.

JAMES W. HOUCK
Timonium, Md.

Even if the Delbancos' thesis—that A.A.'s membership has become diluted by non-alcoholics and that its message has been similarly watered down—is true, it entirely misses the point. For many, A.A. is admittedly nothing more than "a place where one [comes] to ventilate anxiety," but for countless others—certainly the vast majority—it is still "the last stop before the abyss." In my seven-plus years as a member of A.A., I have been exposed to all the points of contention between the old-timers and the younger generation, but the fact remains that A.A. worked when I joined and it works now, and no other treatment or process even comes close to its efficacy. Alcoholics Anonymous, for all its faults and its statistically documented record of individual failures, has rendered the expression "hopeless alcoholic" a contradiction in terms. For those of us who owe our lives to A.A.—and, in my view, for society as a whole—that is sufficient reason for profound gratitude.

THOMAS G.
New York City

Criticizing A.A.'s Big Book for being cornball and male-oriented, as the Delbancos do, seems rather like criticizing Genesis for its faulty cosmology. Sure the Big Book is a product of its time and circumstances. But more than two million people have proved that its timeless truths enable alcoholics, who are otherwise generally immune to assistance, to find, as one of the book's biblical metaphors puts it, the power necessary to "take up their beds and walk again."

Yes, there is much in the literature that is outdated and much in the people now involved in A.A. that is imperfect, but the program works. The ego rupturing that is necessary to tap into the

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spirit usually enables one to handle the additional roadblocks. There is still strong, hard-core, lifesaving A.A. being shared in many places around the country, and I'm betting that the organization will continue to be, by far, the primary source of recovery for alcoholics.

ROB SIMBECK
Nashville, Tenn.

I and a number of fellow A.A. members were touched by and delighted with the insights gained and shared by your authors. It was indeed remarkable that they were able to grasp the essence of the program and the message of powerlessness that often, in my experience, takes members themselves a considerable period of time to understand and assimilate.

I was particularly pleased that the authors noted William James's influence on A.A. In my life, I have been grateful to the Jameses for many things—to Henry for the articulation of manners that I didn't know I needed to practice, and to William for the explanation of philosophies I wasn't aware that I didn't understand. Last month, I was grateful to *The New Yorker* for a synopsis of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, which, over the past decade, has changed my life.

F.A.S.
Pittsburgh, Pa.

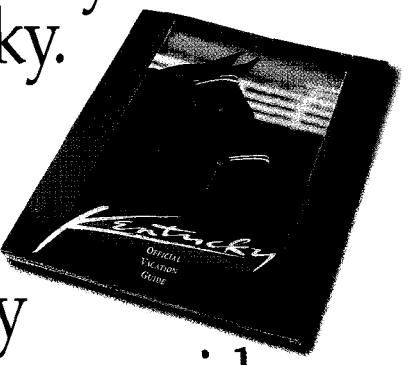
STILL-LIFE WITH CRITICS

A little grin of recognition parted my chops when I read Joyce Carol Oates' true words "Kerouac was dismissed as a 'beatnik' by many commentators who had not troubled to read his work" (Books, March 27th). Nowadays, the very same breed of lazy, dishonest, wit-wanting, reactionary twit dismisses me as a "hippie" novelist without ever troubling to read mine. It appears that in Critics Corner the cobwebs are permanent and the mice are forever blind.

TOM ROBBINS
La Conner, Wash.

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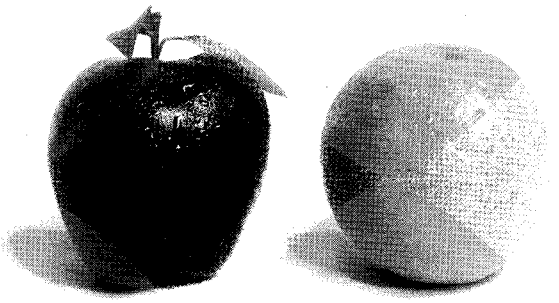


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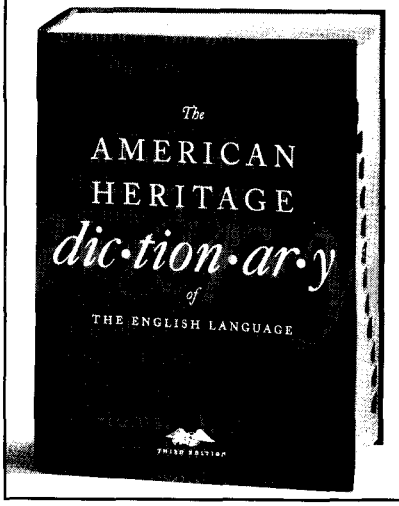
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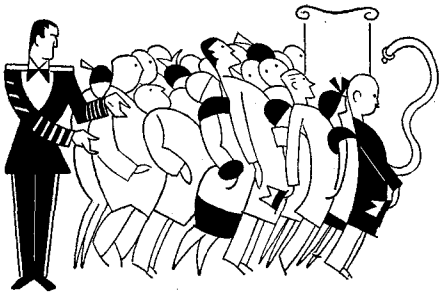


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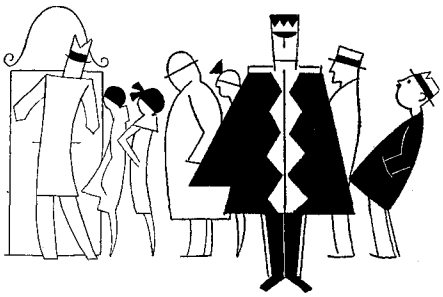
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

On the Make

BROADWAY is suddenly rich with fine young actors, so many that it's possible to assemble a composite of the type. This actor (the term that both men and women prefer) lives in the West Village, or aspires to. He or she rails against the incursion of young Brits on Broadway while counting at least one—Jude Law of "Indiscretions," say, or Rufus Sewell, late of "Translations"—as a drinking buddy. Mornings are spent not at the gym but at home, recovering from the previous night's bout of activity, most likely at O'Flaherty's, on West 46th Street, or some downtown dive whose name no one will divulge for fear of encouraging tourists. The young actor has recently read Brando's autobiography and admires the technique of Brando's latest co-star, Johnny Depp. (But don't even think of praising anybody younger, like Ethan Hawke.) The Yale School of Drama or the Juilliard School is probably on the résumé; N.Y.U. (Billy Crudup, the tutor in "Arcadia") and Yale College (Alessandro Nivola, the tutor in "A Month in the Country") have been cropping up lately, too. The actor may have deigned to do a movie, but only one directed by a shrewd peer (Cara Buono, of "The Rose Tattoo," appears in Noah Baumbach's upcoming "Kicking and Screaming"). The young actor is happiest, however, working onstage, which should make theatregoers happy, too. A TV pilot will beckon soon enough.



Acting out: Jude Law, Cara Buono, and Alessandro Nivola, at O'Flaherty's.

IGOR VISHNYAKOV

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

AMPHITRYON—An adaptation of an adaptation: Eric Overmyer puts his spin on Heinrich von Kleist's version of Molière's farce. Opens April 26 at 7. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

DOG OPERA—In Constance Congdon's new comedy, Kristine Nielson and Albert Macklin portray a pair of insecure city dwellers looking for love. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES—James Lecesne stars in a new musical-theatre work written and directed by Eve Ensler, about a gathering at a dying man's bedside. William Harper wrote the music. Previews begin on April 27. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

HAMLET—Ralph Fiennes is the Prince of Denmark in a production brought to our shores by London's Almeida Theatre Company. Previews through April 30. Opens May 2 at 6:30. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

INDISCRETIONS—The first Broadway staging of "Les Parents Terribles," the 1938 play by Jean Cocteau. Kathleen Turner, Eileen Atkins, Roger Rees, Jude Law, and Cynthia Nixon make up the cast. Two previews on April 26. Opens April 27 at 6:45. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

THE MOUNTAIN GIANTS—Director Giorgio Strehler brings his Il Piccolo Teatro di Milano to New York April 26-30 for five performances of Pirandello's last play. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

MY THING OF LOVE—Infidelity is the subject of Alexandra Gersten's new work, which stars Laurie Metcalf. Also with Tom Irwin, Sheila Kelley, and Mark Blum. In previews. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

NIGHT AND HER STARS—A play by Richard Greenberg, about the quiz-show scandals of the fifties. Presented by Manhattan Theatre Club. Opens April 26 at 8. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

ON THE WATERFRONT—Budd Schulberg and Stan Silverman have adapted Schulberg's screenplay of the 1954 movie for this new drama. The cast includes Penelope Ann Miller, Kevin Conway, and Ron Eldard. Previews through April 30. Opens May 1 at 6:30. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

PARTY—Seven gay men spend an evening playing truth or dare in this comedy written and directed by David Dillon. In previews. (Douglas Fairbanks Theatre, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)

PHAEDRA—Elizabeth Egloff's adaptation of the Greek myth, directed by Evan Yionoulis. In previews. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

POLICE BOYS—Playwrights Horizons presents Marion McClinton's new play, about the repercussions on a city police precinct when a fourteen-year-old gang member is arrested for rape and murder. In previews. (416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

THE PROFESSIONAL—Fritz Weaver is a retired policeman and Jonathan Hogan is a publisher in this work by playwright Dusan Kovacevic, which is set in an Eastern European publishing house. Previews begin April 28. (Circle Repertory Company, 159 Bleecker St. 239-6200.)

RITA'S RESOURCES—A semiautobiographical comedy by Jeannie Barroga, starring Luna Borromeo as the title character, a Philippine immigrant. Previews April 26-27. Opens April 28 at 8. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660.)

THE ROSE TATTOO—Mercedes Ruehl and Anthony LaPaglia star in a forty-fifth-anniversary production of Tennessee Williams' play. Previews through April 29. Opens April 30 at 6:30. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

SHABBATAI—A new musical by Michael Schubert and Michael Edwin, starring Maggi-Meg Reed. In previews. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ARCADIA—Despite some casting glitches, the American première of Tom Stoppard's 1993 play, which shuttles back and forth between 1809 and the present, is an elegant production of an enormous theatrical feat. In a kind of intellectual mystery story, Stoppard provides the audience with the exhilarating illusion of omniscience, allowing us to solve a riddle of history from clues and connections that the characters, caught in time, do not see. Directed by Trevor Nunn. (Reviewed

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in our issue of 4/17/95.) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Camping with Henry & Tom—Henry Ford (John Cunningham), Thomas Edison (Robert Prosky), and Warren Harding (Ken Howard) go camping together in Mark St. Germain's fictional account of an actual woodland episode from 1921. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Clothes for a Summer Hotel—The York Theatre Company's revival of Tennessee Williams' 1980 drama. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820. Closes April 30.)

The Compleat Works of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged)—This slapstick hour and a half romp through the Bard's œuvre, carried out by three fine young gentlemen in high-tops, is utterly sophomoric and a complete waste of time—like some of the best things in life. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

The Cryptogram—David Mamet's new play dramatizes a child's emotional abuse from the child's point of view. With Ed Begley, Jr., Felicity Huffman, and Shelton Dane. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Damn Yankees—Jerry Lewis, the King of Comedy and the King of France, is now, in his Broadway début, the Prince of Darkness—the Devil himself. The old pro delivers the goods. And Charlotte d'Amboise, a sensational Lola, delivers the goods and then some. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Dancing on Moonlight—Keith Glover's drama, set in Harlem in the early sixties, stars Terry Alexander, Anna Maria Horsford, and André De Shields. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

Death Defying Acts—Three subpar one-act comedies, by David Mamet, Elaine May, and Woody Allen, that have the words "Written to Order" stamped all over them. (3/20/95) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Ecstasy—A play about the friendship between two working-class couples, by British filmmaker Mike Leigh, in his American playwriting début. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 924-0077. Closes May 14.)

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes—A miserable, dinner-theatre production, presented by the National Actors Theatre. (4/24/95) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280. Closes May 14.)

Goose and Tomtom—The Willow Cabin Theatre Company offers David Rabe's play. (28th Street Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 886-1889. Closes April 30.)

Grandma Sylvia's Funeral—The audience is part of the group of mourners in this comedy, which is set in a Jewish mortuary. (Playhouse on Vandam, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555.)

The Hairy Ape—The Wooster Group's workshop production of Eugene O'Neill's 1922 drama, with Willem Dafoe, Kate Valk, and others. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Closes May 14.)

Having Our Say—Sadie and Bessie Delany, two sisters who have passed the hundred-year mark and have made a home together for three-quarters of a century, presented their vivid life stories in a 1993 best-seller; the book has been adapted beautifully from the page to the stage by Emily Mann, who also directed. Gloria Foster and Mary Alice are brilliant as the sisters, who, taught by their family to "reach high" despite the dogging of Jim Crow, became a teacher and a dentist. The show is both a portrait of a remarkable relationship and an unsentimental depiction of service, accomplishment, and pride. (4/24/95) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Heiress—A revival of Ruth and Augustus Goetz's 1947 adaptation of Henry James's "Washington Square," directed by Gerald Gutierrez. Cherry Jones, who plays the heiress of the title, is exquisitely—almost unbearably—vulnerable. And the wonderful Frances Sternhagen is touching and funny as a widowed aunt. (3/20/95) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying—In this revival of Frank Loesser's 1961 musical, Matthew Broderick, as the ambitious window-washer J. Pierrepont Finch, has polish and good timing, but he doesn't have the crazy gene that makes a musical star. Lillias White's gospel solo in "Brotherhood of Man," however, lifts the audience into a zone of joy; as a paradigm for the Broadway musical's con game—winning the public's heart while picking its pocket—her display of guile made glorious is as good as it gets. (4/24/95) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

James Lecesne's Word of Mouth—The actor's remarkably varied solo show. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

A Language of Their Own—A drama by Chay Yew. The central characters are four gay men, played by B. D. Wong, Alec Mapa, Francis Jue, and David Drake. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes May 14.)



London Suite—Neil Simon knows how to cater to his audience, but in this follow-up to "Plaza Suite" and "California Suite" he's serving leftovers: the four one-acts are painfully dated in both their substance and their execution. The main pleasure in this production, which marks Simon's first-ever foray into the wilds of Off Broadway, is Carole Shelley, who provides some much-needed comic muscle tone. Also with Paxton Whitehead, Kate Burton, and Jeffrey Jones. Daniel Sullivan directed. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

Love! Valour! Compassion!—The eight gay men in Terrence McNally's beautifully written drama (nimbly directed by Joe Mantello) connect in ways that almost any nuclear family would envy. (11/14/94) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Memories of an Unknown Celebrity—Michael Mindlin's monologue about his famous friends. Directed by Phyllis Newman. (William Redfield, 354 W. 45th St. 279-4200.)

A Month in the Country—The English actress Helen Mirren makes her Broadway début in the Roundabout's staging of the Turgenev classic. With Ron Rifkin and F. Murray Abraham. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Morticians in Love—A dark comedy by Christi Stewart-Brown. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 307-4100.)

Mrs. Warren's Profession—The bordello magnate who is the title character in George Bernard Shaw's 1898 drama makes a strong case for young women who choose to work in high-class brothels rather than ruin their health for a pittance in lead factories (or make loveless marriages). Margo Skinner plays Kitty Warren so forcefully that she partially undermines Shaw's design—this Mrs. Warren seems to crush all moral objections to her profession, especially the ones that her splendidly independent but less persuasive daughter (Chelsea Altman) offers. Otherwise, director Alex Dmitriev and the Pearl Theatre Company have mounted a satisfying production. (80 St. Mark's Pl. 598-9802. Closes May 7.)

The Only Thing Worse You Could Have Told Me . . .—Dan Butler, in his one-man show, takes a look at contemporary gay culture. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 307-4100.)

Rob Becker's Defending the Caveman—A hundred-minute standup routine. Some of Becker's examples of discontent between the sexes are very funny (a lot of vigorous nodding goes on in the theatre—never by men and women at the same time), but a fair amount of them are shopworn. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

A Royal Affair—An illegal alien and some aristocrats meet up in this comedy by Luis Santeiro. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes May 7.)

Show Boat—Harold Prince's epic-size production of the 1927 Jerome Kern–Oscar Hammerstein II musical: full of life and full of vision. (10/17/94) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Smokey Joe's Café—The Songs of Leiber and Stoller—A feast of early rock and roll, performed by a cast with Grade A lungs and legs. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Sunset Boulevard—Glenn Close continues her triumphant run as Norma Desmond. (12/5/94) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007.)

The Swamp Dwellers—The Africa Arts Theatre Company presents the New York première of one of the Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka's early dramas. Directed by Patricia Floyd. (28th Street Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 926-9203. Closes April 30.)

Swingtime Canteen—A re-creation of a 1944 U.S.O. concert, performed in a night club. Extraneous bits of plot threaten to derail the show, but the lovely songs, done with verve and charm, carry the day. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Three Viewings—Jeffrey Hatcher's play, which is set in a funeral home, consists of three fine comic monologues. Margaret Whitton, as a blue blood turned casket robber (she sucks a pair of ruby earrings from the lobes of a rich stiff), and Penny Fuller, as a widow who has inherited more debt than her husband's frozen assets can cover, are both funny and affecting. Buck Henry, as a lovesick undertaker, is Buck Henry. Mary B. Robinson directed. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes April 30.)

Travels with My Aunt—Jim Dale and Brian Murray in Giles Havergal's adaptation of the Graham Greene novel. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 307-4100.)

LONG RUNS

All in the Timing: John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **Beauty and the Beast:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **Blood Brothers:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes April 30. . . . **Blue Man Group/Tubes:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **Cats:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **Crazy for You:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **The Fantasticks:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **Grease!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **An Inspector Calls:** Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Jackie Mason: Politically Incorrect:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Jelly Roll:** Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **Kiss of the Spider Woman:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **Les Misérables:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Miss Saigon:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **Perfect Crime:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **The Phantom of the Opera:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **Stomp:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. . . . **That's Life!:** Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090. . . . **Three Tall Women:** Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200. . . . **Tony n' Tina's Wedding:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **The Who's Tommy:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

MAX MILLER

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DANCE

American Ballet Theatre—April 26 at 2: "Theme and Variations," "A Brahms Symphony," and "Gaîté Parisienne." . . . ¶ April 26 at 8: "Les Sylphides," "A Brahms Symphony," and "Theme and Variations." . . . ¶ April 27 at 8: "Les Sylphides," "Cruel World," and "In the Upper Room." . . . ¶ April 28 and May 2 at 8, and April 29 at 2 and 8: "Giselle." . . . ¶ May 1 at 7: A gala evening in which the company performs three new works by Twyla Tharp. "How Near Heaven," set to Benjamin Britten's "Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge," will become part of the repertory; this is the only performance scheduled for the other two, "Americans We" and "On the Wing." In the latter, Tharp sets her eye-rattling eclecticism—an idiom that mixes speed-ballroom, leaping flamenco, and slouch ballet—to a disciplined jazz score by Wynton Marsalis that ranges from Dixieland to dissonance. The dance ends with a leap into a center-stage melee, a hang-time image that recalls the billboard silhouette of Michael Jordan. The brashness fits, and so does the not-so-secret message that a legend has returned. (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 17.)

New York City Ballet—April 26 at 8: "Raymonda Variations," "2 & 3 Part Inventions," and "Glass Pieces." . . . ¶ April 27 at 8: "Donizetti Variations," "The Four Temperaments," and "Firebird." . . . ¶ April 28 at 8: "Donizetti Variations," "Opus 19 / The Dreamer," and "Jeu de Cartes." . . . ¶ April 29 at 2: "Jeu de Cartes," "2 & 3 Part Inventions," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ April 29 at 8: "Raymonda Variations," "Opus 19 / The Dreamer," and "Glass Pieces." . . . ¶ April 30 at 1: "Jeu de Cartes," "The Four Temperaments," and "Glass Pieces." . . . ¶ April 30 at 7: "Raymonda Variations," "Firebird," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ May 2 at 8: "2 & 3 Part Inventions," "Opus 19 / The Dreamer," and "Glass Pieces." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 25.)

Elisa Monte Dance—The modern-dance company, in its thirteenth season. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. April 26-29 at 8 and April 30 at 2 and 7:30.)

"JohnnySpot"—Kyle deCamp, a choreographer who translates works from other mediums into dance-theatre pieces, here takes on film, staging scenes from movies of the thirties to the fifties. She plays the heroines, aided by two other dancers and an actress, as if she were a one-woman Oscars montage. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. April 27-29 at 8 and April 30 at 3.)

"Women Along the River: New Dance from the South Asian Diaspora"—The Canadian choreographer Deepti Gupta and her company, the Angikam Dance Initiative, present "Quanta," a blend of Kathak and modern idioms inspired by dances that Gupta saw on her visits to Indian temples. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. April 28-30 at 8:30.)

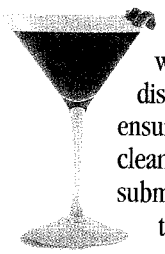
Mimi Garrard Dance Theatre—The company known for technological experimentation (in computerized lighting, film, slide projection, etc.) begins its fourth decade. The three-week engagement opens with "On a Time" (1990-95), "Phosphones" (1970), "Exchange" (1984), and the première of "Renderings." (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. 864-2929. April 28-29 at 8 and April 30 at 3. Through May 14.)

Martha Bowers Dance / Theatre / Etcetera—The site-specific choreographer is currently working on a piece about railroad history, to be performed in the Lincoln, Nebraska, train yards. For this engagement, she comes indoors, with "Short Stories" and the première of "Way More Blues." (Dia Center for the Arts, 155 Mercer St. April 27-28 at 8. For reservations, call 982-0818.)

"Rhythm & Magic"—Sabah, Ariane Pierre, and Liliana Morales, in Turkish Gypsy dance, pan-African trance dance, and flamenco, respectively. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. April 28 at 8.)



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NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

ARMEN DONELIAN—The jazz pianist, heading up a quartet. (Parsons Cinema, 66 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. April 26 at 1 P.M. No tickets necessary.)

VAN HALEN—Ever since David Lee Roth hit the road, Van Halen just hasn't been the same. It was always Diamond Dave's wacky neo-Vegas shtick that subverted the band's sophomoric metal leanings; without him they sound generic. The newly groomed Eddie Van Halen is still a guitar superhero, but even his mighty wang bar can't save the world from Sammy Hagar. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. April 26 at 7:30.)

GIPSY KINGS—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. April 27-28 at 8.

JACK WILKINS, JOE COHN, AND RUSSELL MALONE—Jazz guitarists all. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. April 28 at 6. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

QWERTYUIOP—An avant-garde performance troupe that uses altered instruments, giant wooden teeth, and puppets. (Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. April 28 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

DOUGIE MACLEAN AND LAURA LOVE—Two singer-songwriters, one from Scotland, the other from Seattle. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. April 28 at 8.)

MURIEL MWAMBA—The Zambian vocalist. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. April 29 at 8. For information about tickets, call 545-7536.)

ELLINGTONIA EVENING—David Berger leads a sixteen-piece big band that includes Frank Wess, Roland Hanna, and Jerome Richardson. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. April 29 at 8.)

PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ BAND—Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn. 1-718 951-4500. April 29 at 8.

ANITA BAKER—Radio City Music Hall. April 29-30 and May 3-4 at 8.

DIONNE WARWICK AND BURT BACHARACH—Westbury Music Fair. 1-516 334-0800. April 30 at 7.

NISHAT KHAN AND ZAKIR HUSSAIN—Playing sitar and tabla, respectively. (Miller Theatre. May 1 at 8.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **JULIE WILSON** is currently in the midst of an extended run. Dining.

ARTHUR'S TAVERN, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy and Johnny Parker, Fridays and Saturdays to the Freddy Francis trio, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—April 28-29: **GEORGE COLEMAN.** He's a marvel: there isn't a sax player around who knows his instrument better, or who imparts so much knowledge in every marathon solo. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is an institution and knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? Through April 30: flutist **HERBIE MANN** celebrates his sixty-fifth birthday. File Mann alongside Dave Brubeck, Stan Kenton, and a few other lucky players who have enjoyed amazing long-term popularity. His forte seems to be his chameleon-like adaptability—one year he's Latin, the next he's R. & B., the year after that he'll turn up lite-rock—but his amiable tooting carpets it all. This weeklong party will feature a brace of guest stars. May 2: The **CEDAR WALTON** trio and the **JOHNNY GRIFFIN** quartet drop by for a week. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—April 26: Separating the artist from the artisan in **JOHN PATITUCCI** is tough. This super bassist is a first-call L.A. session-meister, and—notwithstanding a long association with Chick Corea's misspelled Akoustic and Elektric bands—he remains a wonder. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists, bassists, and, occasionally, drummers compete for your ear. Truth and beauty usually prevail. Duelling pianists **KENNY BARRON** and **MULGREW MILLER** continue through April 29. Barron may have succeeded too well as the pianist of choice—being ubiquitous and being taken for granted go hand in hand. Whatever the drawbacks of popularity and consistency may be, he turns every set into a lesson in eloquent improvisation. He may be the most sympathetic accompanist around, but under the spotlight he's a star. Miller was part of Betty Carter's trio in the early eighties, before he got tapped for the coveted piano slot in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Dining.

CAJUN, 129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (691-6174)—A New Orleans-style restaurant specializing in Dixieland and swing. On Fridays, catch the Canal Street Dixieland Jazz and Blues band. Saturdays belong to the New Atlantic Jazz band.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through April 29, the amazing **EARTHA KITT.** Kitt is still a fierce and funny performer with a feral grip on her audience. She inhabits her songs: when she sings "I Wanna Be Evil," you don't doubt for a second that she could spit tacks.

THE COOLER, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A lavender and stainless-steel vault deep in the heart of the meat district. April 28: **BY ANY MEANS**, featuring **RASHIED ALI, WILLIAM PARKER,** and **CHARLES GAYLE.** Put these three unabashed expressionists together and a big noise is guaranteed. Gayle coaxes the sax into corners it's avoided since Coltrane died; Parker's bass has the flexibility of a charmed snake; and drummer Ali turns rhythm into heavy artillery. Tuesday nights are given over to experimental d.j. spinoffs.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—Through April 30: guitarist **CHARLIE BYRD.** On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

FIFTY SEVEN FIFTY SEVEN, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A sleek piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Thursdays through Sundays, **DONALD JOHNSTON** is the featured pianist; on Fridays and Saturdays he performs with a trio. Dining.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. Through April 30: the **PHILIP HARPER** group. The **BOBBY WATSON** electric sextet swings in on May 2. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass figurine lamps. April 26-29: Piano and bass with **MIKE LE DONNE** and **KIYOSHI KITAGAWA.**

METROPOLIS, 31 Union Sq. W. (675-2300)—A swank basement club, home to high-energy jazz combos. April 30: Vocalist **SUE TERRY.** Tuesdays are given over to the **GEORGE GEE ORCHESTRA,** a seventeen-piece swing band.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble. Closed Sundays.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—The great cabaret in the sky. Through April 29: **LILIANE MONTEVECCHI** and **DAVID STALLER,** in a program called "April in Paris." The delightful **MARY CLEERE HARAN** takes over on May 2. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Michael Andrew and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Thursdays belong to Stan Rubin's big band; Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and Sam Ulano and the Bourbon Street Swingers; and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

SMALLS, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—This aptly named club features up-and-coming players jamming late into the night.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club where the musicians are always top-shelf. **VINCENT HERRING** (in through April 30) may have a Cannonball Adderley obsession, but lately he's been asserting his own highly charged personality. The **CARL ALLEN** quintet whoops it up on May 2. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—You'll have to wait two more

TABLES FOR TWO

Dining around town



FIRST, 87 First Ave., at 5th St. (674-3823)—First wasn't the first step in the gastronomic gentrification of the East Village—cabs had long been depositing diners from well above 14th Street into the Miracle Grill, Pisces, and the late (alas) Jerry's—but it did up the ante. At chef and owner Sam DeMarco's late-night salon, situated low on the eponymous avenue, the groovy and the greedy meet over mountains of food whose topography is hard to descry in the gloaming. (Mr. DeMarco believes less is more only in the lighting department: one tiny candle on each table shines on portions that would challenge Gargantua.) Here even the appetizers have side dishes, and the chef is so creative with carbohydrates that you might want to order backwards, accepting, say, a sautéed-sweetbread burger or barbecued St. Louis ribs in order to get some Tuscan white beans or a potato-and-asparagus salad.

Given the pigging out that goes on here, it's remarkable how sexy First is. Some of the reasons are clear: the abundance of booths, the throbbing bass, the small steel globe with protruding spikes that is suspended from a metal cable. Hardly any tables feature a typical gender-number-age combination. One has a middle-aged couple in full drag sharing a hubcap-size apple tart with a blond homecoming queen. Another is crammed with a dozen young lawyers with loosened ties. The bar hosts several representatives of the pierced crowd. And nearly every side booth briefly entertains Mr. DeMarco, who has a stentorian laugh and looks like a cross between the post-haircut André Agassi and a leprechaun. His cooking is very elegant, though, and his restaurant boasts the only table scraper on the Lower East Side. (Open daily for dinner; the kitchen closes late. Entrées $11-$17.50.)

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weeks to see his big-booted sister Nancy (at the Limelight), but bandleader and No. 1 son **FRANK SINATRA, JR.**, is here now, with a swinging twenty-piece orchestra. Will Frank, Sr., show up? No. But hey, that's more room for you. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—**HAROLD ASHBY** (in through April 30) has been carrying on the tradition of the big-toned, heart-on-the-sleeve tenor sax ever since Duke Ellington hired him as a resident romantic in the late sixties. Ashby's forthright swing can surely cure what ails you. **DAVID SANCHEZ** takes over on May 2. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

VISIONES, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—April 26-29: The **KENNY WERNER** trio. While young piano virtuosos are arriving by the wagonload, there's still room for evolving perennials like Werner, an eminently smart stylist. May 2: The **DWAYNE BURNO** quartet.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. Through April 29: Piano and bass with **HILTON RUIZ** and **ANDY MC CLOUD.**

ROCK, ETC.

A.K.A., 77 W. Houston St., at Wooster St. (673-7325)—April 29 belongs to the local funk combo **MILO Z.** The **ACCIDENTS** take over on April 30.

BLARNEY STAR, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night. April 28: An evening of County Sligo-style fiddle with **JAMES KELLY.**

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—April 27: **JEFFREY GAINES.** Call him an angry but sensitive young man. Gaines's brisk melodies and taut arrangements recall the singer-songwriters of the post-punk era, but his earnest lyrics bring James Taylor to mind. Fans of the Rounder record label should stop by on April 28 for a party celebrating the release of the film "True Believers." Fans of the movie "The Commitments" should drop by on April 30, when members of its cast will be performing. Dining.

BROWNIES, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (429-8392)—April 30: Rock with the **MELVINS.**

CAFÉ A GO GO, 144 Bleecker St. (475-1241)—A happening new rock club on a street steeped in musical history. Speaking of history, **MARIA MULDAUR,** who brought us "Midnight at the Oasis" in 1974, makes a comeback on April 29.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—A narrow, graffiti-strewn cave packed every evening with new and used bands of the loud variety. April 30: **JAWBOX.**

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Buddy Guy may be better known, but **OTIS RUSH** (in on April 28-29) has been nipping at his ankles for more than four decades. Rush is nothing if not intense: his phrasing stings with a lyricism just this side of murderous, and his pledge that "I've been wronged but I won't be wronged again" is just as chilling. Dig out the first Led Zeppelin album to gauge Rush's seminal influence on rock—but don't blame him for the bombast.

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, punks, poseurs, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. Live music nightly.

DON HILL'S, 511 Greenwich St. (219-2850)—A tidy little SoHo bar with an above-average P.A. system and top-notch local bands on the docket. Friday night is Squeeze Box, a vinyl-and-velvet gay glamfest, hosted by Mistress Formika.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—April 26: **HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER,** featuring "Saturday Night Live" guitarist **G. E. SMITH.** Mondays are given over to "The Honeysuckles," a weekly live soap opera, and the **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

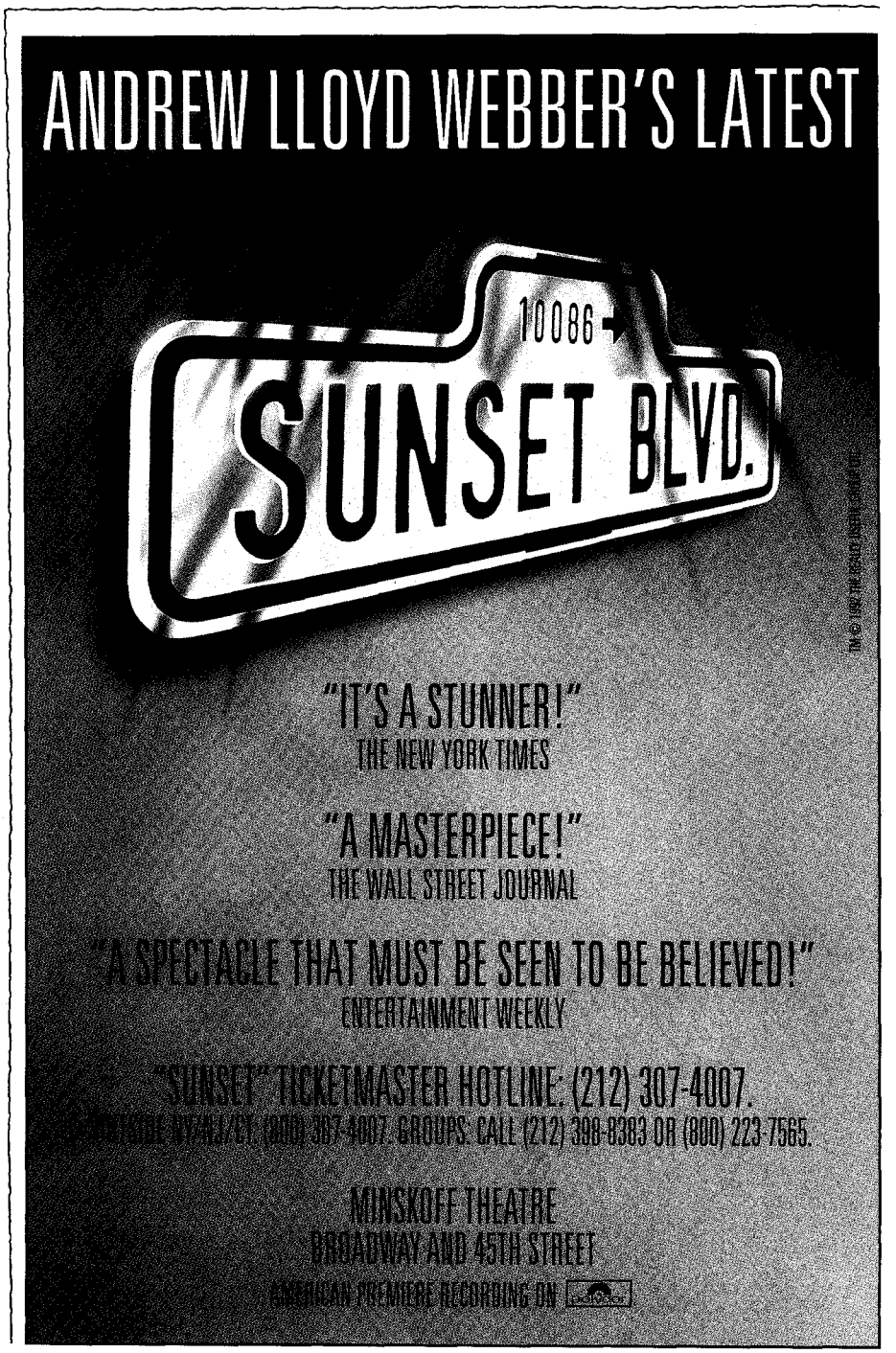
IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—April 26: **DINOSAUR JR.** Like Evan Dando's chin, J. Mascis's guitar playing has inspired a great deal of nauseating hagiography. (*Newsweek* called him "the most melodic and eloquent guitarist that punk has produced," but his solos are much trickier than any self-respecting punk's.) Mascis can play all right, but it's his dark, throaty voice and dislocated lyrics that make Dinosaur Jr. cool. On "Without a Sound," the band's recent release, they seem to have closed the gap between brute force and pop filigree. Live, they're even better. With **CHAVEZ.** April 27: The **SMITHEREENS.** . . . ¶ Soul Kitchen, the original seventies funk and R. & B. party, goes down (late) every Tuesday. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

KAPTAIN BANANA, 101 Greene St. (343-9000)—French cabaret *en travesti* in SoHo. Three drag queens and eight dancers re-create the Court of Versailles, a carnival in Rio, Marlene Dietrich, and the Andrews Sisters. There's also a singing gorilla. Dining.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—April 26-27: **LUKA BLOOM.** Three years ago, this Irish folk-rocker had a brilliant idea: he took a rap song, LL Cool J's "I Need Love," and turned it into a hearty, brogue-inflected ballad. (At the Newport Folk Festival, he claimed that the song was actually written by his grandfather, "Mr. LL O'Cool J.") Bloom's own material is a bit less inspired, and he seems to have dropped off the radar screen. But he remains an eclectic gem and a hell of a guitar player, too. April 29: **BABE THE BLUE OX.** May 2: **VELOCITY GIRL.** This indie quartet, led by vocalist Sarah Shannon, formed at the University of Maryland in the late eighties. They write appealing pop songs that are roughed up by skittish guitar noise and unpredictable turns. In concert, they like to show off their tough side.

LIMELIGHT, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—The rock-and-roll church. May 2: **LOW POP SUICIDE.** Wednesday night is Disco 2000, a fin-de-siècle blowout.

LUDLOW STREET CAFÉ, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—A modest belowstairs room that looks like a spruced-up tenement apartment. April



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28: The **NIAGARAS.** Mondays belong to **BEAT RODEO,** a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side blues. April 28-29: **JOHNNY ALLEN** rocks the house.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—Romance awaits! Meet your date at the World Trade Center and hold hands on the PATH as it burrows its way under the Hudson to Hoboken, the burg that gave the world baseball and Ol' Blue Eyes. April 29: **GUTTERBALL** and the **STEVE WYNN** quartet. May 1: **VELOCITY GIRL** warms up for its Knitting Factory gig. With **JUICY.**

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—This week the Merc, like Marie Osmond, is a little bit country. **JUNIOR BROWN** (April 26-27) is something of a country-and-Western throwback: he has a flair for songs about heartbreak, hillbillies, and fools, and his salty basso profundo is more George Jones than Randy Travis. Unlike a lot of country singers, Brown can laugh at himself and at the bizarre characters who populate his propulsive, guitar-driven material. He calls his fearsome-looking instrument the "guit-steel": a device of his own invention, it's a cross between a Fender Bullet and an old lap steel guitar, and it allows him to switch from rapid-fire chicken pickin' to delicate slide work in a single bar. He's also fond of that old Bo Diddley trick of plucking a string and then detuning it until it's moaning low and flapping in the breeze. May 2: The fine country songs of **RADNEY FOSTER.**

NELL'S, 246 W. 14th St. (675-1567)—A Victorian-style club, home to an eclectic crowd of downtown youngsters dancing to throbbing funk and techno-pop. Monday night is Funky Buddha, with live bands and d.j. Derek Corley "on the wheels."

PADDY REILLY'S MUSIC BAR, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—**BLACK 47** usually plays on Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights.



Portishead, at the Supper Club.

RODEO BAR, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—The walls simulate a log cabin, smoke blows through the nostrils of a buffalo head, a horse trailer has been converted into a bar, and you get peanuts for eating and, sometimes, throwing. The **FLYING NEUTRINOS** have the floor on Sunday evenings.

ROSELAND, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—Ballroom dancing on Thursdays and Sundays. The rest of the week it's another dark, sweaty rock club. April 28: The Gothic eye-shadow rock of **SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES.**

S.O.B.'S, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. April 26: Seventies funkster **DONALD BYRD.** Thursday nights belong to Giant Step, a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop. Dining.

SUPPER CLUB, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—April 30: **PORTISHEAD.** This band from Bristol makes what might be best described as purr-pop. Geoff Barrow samples old spy-flick music, lush strings, and assorted blips and grinds, then adds reedy keyboards, rim shots, and sizzling cymbals. The slow, evanescent results play like a French film-noir soundtrack you can dance to. Over the mix Beth Gibbons sings bittersweet love poems in a high, wispy voice that sounds as if she's about to weep.

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—April 26: Nashville rock-and-roller **WEBB WILDER.** April 27-28: **MIKE WATT** and the **FOO FIGHTERS.** Watt was the bassist for the notoriously hyperactive punk band the Minutemen; his new record, "Ball-Hog or Tugboat?," includes vocal contributions by Eddie Vedder, Evan Dando, and a few other young whippersnappers. The Foo Fighters' big draw is Nirvana drummer David Grohl, who plays guitar in this outfit. April 29: The **STEVE MORSE** band. It's fashionable, of course, to dump on guitar heroes, but Morse, who's best known for his band the Dixie Dregs, is the sort of player who can melt steel with his fingers.

WEBSTER HALL, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—**THE TRIPS** light up this vast environmentally friendly club on April 28, with **CIRCUS WHISTLE.**

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ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Portraits of George Sand, Delacroix, Baudelaire, Berlioz, and a very young Sarah Bernhardt are among those on view in an exhibition of works by the master photographer Nadar (Félix Tournachon, 1820-1910). Through July 9. . . . ¶ "The Seven Deadly Sins," a suite of paintings by Paul Cadmus, is at the center of a small show of his works (another of which is "The Eighth Sin: Jealousy"). . . . ¶ "An Egyptian Bestiary," a large non-petting zoo of falcons, baboons, hippos, and ibis, in stone, ivory, gold, bronze, and wood. . . . ¶ The Costume Institute has come up with a fresh take on the old spring flower show: in "Bloom: Fashion's Spring Gardens," one wanders among stands of gowns, blouses, and waistcoats adorned with tropical exotica, blue-blood roses, black *fleurs du mal*, and a host of other flora. . . . ¶ "R. B. Kitaj," a retrospective of more than seventy paintings by the American expatriate who for nearly four decades has lived and worked in London. Through May 14. . . . ¶ "I Tell My Heart: The Art of Horace Pippin," a selection of paintings by a self-taught black artist from Pennsylvania (1888-1946). Through April 30. . . . ¶ "The Architecture of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1870-1995," a hundred renderings, sketches, and working drawings. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—A retrospective of video installations, sculptural objects, walk-in environments, and sound pieces by Bruce Nauman. Through May 23. . . . ¶ "Helen Chadwick: Bad Blooms," another variation on the spring flower show—large, round photographs of flowers suspended in different substances (dandelions in hair gel, narcissi in bath bubbles, bluebells in oil and milk). Through July 11. . . . ¶ Tom Friedman's deadpan sculptures are the subject of the current "projects" show. A self-portrait has been carved from a regular-sized aspirin tablet; other pieces incorporate bubble gum, spaghetti, and dust. Through May 18. . . . ¶ "American Sculptors in the 1960s: Selected Drawings from the Collection," a superb selection of works on paper, with an emphasis on American minimalism and post-minimalism. Many are working drawings, so the curators have also included some of the finished sculptures—by Sol LeWitt, Robert Smithson, and Carl Andre; Smithson's mirrored corner piece is especially beautiful. Through June 13. . . . ¶ "Max Beckmann Prints" includes lithographs, drypoints, and woodcuts from throughout the German Expressionist's career. Through May 9. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A Ross Bleckner retrospective treats us to liberal helpings of the painter's familiar stew of sublimity and kitsch—the work of a soul profoundly divided between the raptures of a mystic and the whimsies of an interior decorator. Much of it is sickly gorgeous; some of it betrays a deep spiritual longing. Through May 14. . . . ¶ A ten-year survey of the work of Felix Gonzalez-Torres. This Cuban-born Neo-Conceptualist supplements his typically sparse or abstract imagery (stacks of paper, sometimes bearing cryptic messages; spills of hard candies and of bubble gum) with parenthetical subtitles that allude to AIDS, politics, and more personal themes. Through May 10. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The 1995 Biennial exhibition. (Open Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; and Fridays, 11 to 9, with no admission charge after 6 and live music and performances in the lower gallery.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Spiders!" Are you ready for this arachnorama? Twelve live tarantulas are at the center of the web. You can also get caught up in anatomical diagrams, habitat dioramas (who knew?), exoskeleton models, and courtship videos (yecch). Through June 4. . . . ¶ A large show of paintings made for Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson during their study in Bali from 1936 to 1938. Through May 3. . . . ¶ "Expedition" is a new way for visitors to blaze a trail through the museum: you set out from the base camp near the entrance with a free guidebook, or you can rent a CD player and listen to a recorded narration. On the way, children can get their passports stamped at five different field stations. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"The Pictographs of Adolph Gottlieb." By 1941, Gottlieb (1903-74) had had it with the prevailing American provincial realism and European geometric abstraction. The "Pictographs" series—gridded paintings with Native American, Freudian, Joycean, and other imagery, in free-associative compositions—began the evolution of his style toward maturity. Sixty works are on view, supplemented by objects from the museum's tribal-art holdings, many of which had been part of the artist's own collection. . . . ¶ The African galleries have reopened, greatly expanded, and now contain more than two hundred and fifty works. . . . ¶ Two other displays are new: the Arts of the Pacific gallery, which has works from Melanesia, and the Arts of the Andes, in the Great Hall. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

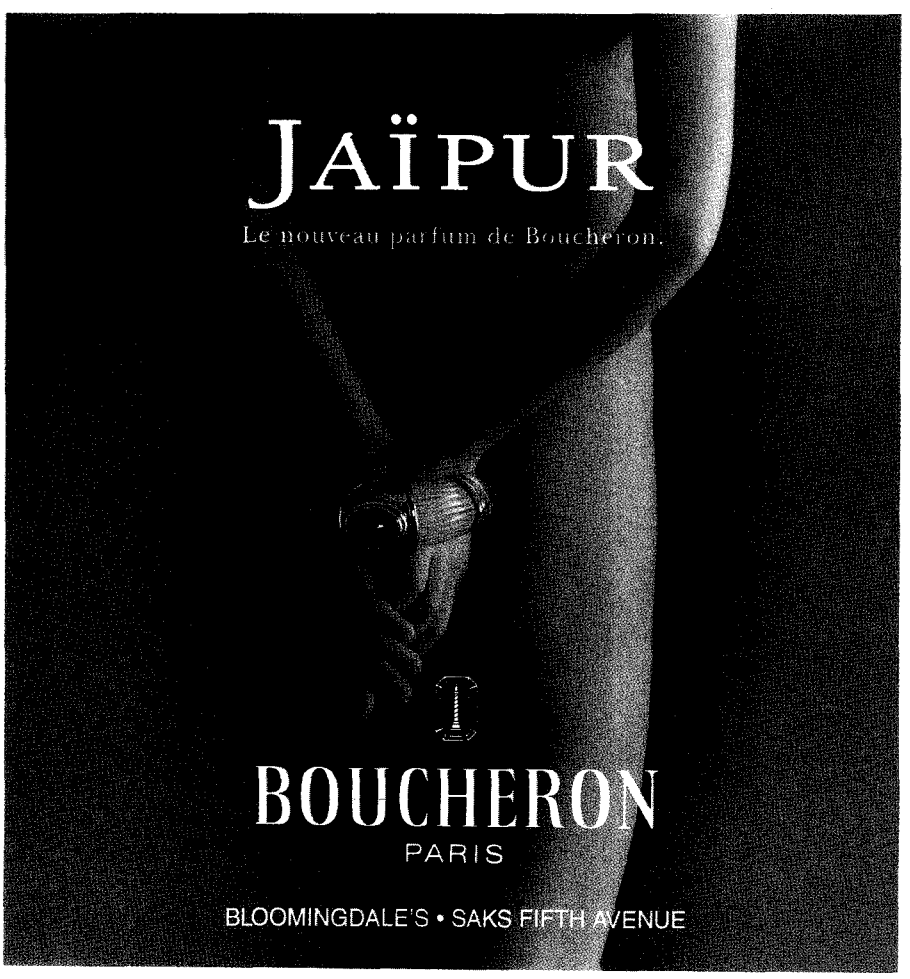
Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—Monkeys acting like humans, monkeys in their natural state, and monkeys as divine figures: these images grace sculptures, prints, and objects from India, Southeast Asia, Tibet, China, and Japan in a show called. . . "Monkey." . . . ¶ "New Finds, Old Treasures: Early Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection" brings renowned pieces together with recent and surprising archeological discoveries. The golden age of Chinese ceramics coincided with the Song dynasty (960-1279), and examples of its five great wares are the loveliest pieces on view. Through June 18. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Bard Graduate Center, 18 W. 86th St.—"Arthur J. Stone: Master Silversmith," a comprehensive survey of the presentation silverware, ecclesiastical commissions, and meticulously crafted tableware made by the immigrant from Sheffield who set up shop in 1901 in Gardner, Mass. Through May 14. . . . ¶ More vase, goblet, bowl, and tea-service masterpieces by another Sheffield native, Omar Ramsden. Through May 14. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8:30.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—Manchu invasions and imperial infighting in the mid-seventeenth century forced potters in the major cities of southern China to search out new patrons. Luckily, the scholar-gentry and merchant classes of the region were wealthy and eager enough to step in. "Chinese Porcelains of the Seventeenth Century: Landscapes, Scholars' Motifs, and Narratives" illustrates the shift in style and design, with sixty vases, brush pots, jars, and bowls. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Tuesday evenings until 8; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—"Gems of the Floating World," a large show of seldom displayed ukiyo-e prints from the Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden. Through June 4. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Camille Pissarro: Impressionist Innovator" includes many of the artist's landscapes, figure paintings, family portraits, and Japonism-inspired design experiments. Through July



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16. . . . ¶ "Women Photographers of the Weimar Republic," late-twenties and thirties works by Lucia Moholy, Lotte Jacobi, Hannah Höch, Florence Henri, and others. Through July 30. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"*Curating New York: The Legacy of* Grace M. Mayer" is a tribute to the museum's first curator of prints and photographs. Fifty works are on view, including photographs by Berenice Abbott and the Wurts brothers, prints by Currier and Ives, political cartoons by Rollin Kirby, and cityscapes by Reginald Marsh. . . . ¶ "New York Saved: Thirty Years of Landmarks Preservation." Through July 30. . . . ¶ "A Century Apart: Images of Struggle & Spirit, Jacob Riis and Five Contemporary Photographers." Documents of the city's poor by the nation's first photojournalist, alongside work on similar themes by Martine Barrat, Mary Ellen Mark, Margaret Morton, Jeffrey Henson Scales, and Fred R. Conrad. . . . ¶ "All the Frills Upon It: New York Bonnets on Parade," a spring blooming of silk, satin, chenille, and velvet, trimmed with lilacs, wisteria, and morning glories. Through May 14. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Road, Long Island City—Now open for its tenth season, this museum, with its twelve galleries and peaceful, ivy-walled center garden, is an oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of the artist's sculptures and lanterns. (Open Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Marcel Broodthaers (1924-76)—Delicate, witty, and dryly poetic, these works on paper—drawings and collages—provide a superb introduction to the eccentric, hard-to-place Belgian artist/poet's themes (which include imaginary museums, classification systems, and his own signature). A visitor to this wonderful show might be surprised to learn that his œuvre represents a cornerstone of that usually glum-faced branch of Conceptualism known as institutional critique. Through May 6. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St. Open Mondays. . . . ¶ Photographic works by Broodthaers, incorporating drawing and collage, are at Sander, 19 E. 76th St., through April 29.)

Lawrence Gipe—"Approved Images," new paintings based on romantic genre photographs that satisfied Nazi ideological requirements and were published in the "German Annual of Fine Art Photography" during the years 1934-39. Through May 27. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Philip Guston (1913-80)—Paintings and drawings from the fifties, when, for a few years, the artist's work consisted of small patches of color on larger fields. Through June 3. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Duane Hanson—A fat cleaning lady, a Ken-doll cop, a retired couple in Bermuda shorts, their cellulite rippling: the superrealist sculptor's chronicle of American tackiness marches onward and downward. Hanson's style hasn't deviated a hair (literally) since day one, but he is amazingly good at what he does. When the air-conditioning rustles the magazine that a flea-market dealer is holding, you experience a frisson not quite like any other. Through May 6. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

Joyce Kozloff—"Mapping Public and Private," a show of hand-painted ceramic tile panels and works with watercolor, photographs, and collage elements. Through May 13. (Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Keith Milow—Pseudo-inspirational monuments in fibreglass coated with a rusted patina and engraved with the names of twentieth-century artists, by a British sculptor. They suggest a lintel on a university library that touts Giacometti and Gilbert and George instead of Sophocles and Shakespeare. Through May 13. (Haime, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Joan Nelson—Foliage-filled, darkly Romantic landscapes in oil, acrylic, and wax on wood, with a crackle varnish that gives a frescolike effect. Through April 29. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)



Camille Pissarro, at the Jewish Museum.

Odd Nerdrum—Old Master techniques and mythological, Biblical, and apocalyptic imagery coalesce into something strange indeed in the Norwegian figurative painter's new works. Through May 26. (Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Bruce Robbins—Paintings in which neat, dark rectangles of heavy oil and encaustic are juxtaposed with fields of white incised with marks that look like the frantic scrabbling of a cursed creature imprisoned on the other side of the picture plane. Through May 20. (Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St.)

Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640)—Small- and medium-scale paintings and oil sketches: portraits, allegorical scenes, and religious subjects, all of superlative quality. The most extraordinary work is a fragment from a large painting: a small portrait of Vincenzo II Gonzaga, son of the Duke of Mantua, it demonstrates Rubens' famous *sprezzatura*—the frothy, fluid, yet precisely controlled brushstroke that was his trademark. The original painting depicted the family at prayer, and the boy's eyes are looking heavenward, but his full, slightly pouting lips betray the first hints of aristocratic sensuality. Through May 19. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

George Segal—The artist's signature body-cast sculptures combined with gritty black-and-white photo murals of New York street life. Segal's best-known work from the sixties and seventies had a folksy quality that at times verged on blandness; these new pieces—"Parking Garage," for example, which appears to show a homeless man menacing a woman passing by a graffiti-covered brick wall—have a chilly toughness that is all too real. Through April 29. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St.)

Short List—**Fritz Bultman,** Schlesinger, 24 E. 73rd St. Opens Saturdays at noon; through April 29. . . . **Steven Conroy** and **Larry Rivers,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays; through April 29. . . . **Burgoyne Diller** and **Charles Seliger,** Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. Through June 3. . . . **Sidney Goodman,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. Through April 29. . . . **Larry Poons,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays; through April 29. . . . **James Valerio,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. Through April 29. . . . **Timothy Woodman,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through June 3.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Matthew Barney—An installation derived from the artist's eagerly anticipated new video work, "CREMASTER 4." The twenty-seven-year-old Barney, whose works mingle robust athleticism, polymorphous sexuality, and a keen appreciation of fashion, is one of the few indisputable art stars of the nineties (so far). Although the installation is a technical feat—it reproduces, in miniature, one of the video's grandest sets—it's mainly a teaser for the forty-two-minute production, which is screened at the Public Theatre on Thursdays at 4 and on Saturdays and Sundays at 1:30 and 3. For reservations, call 431-5794. Through May 6. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Stan Douglas—Color photographs and 16-mm.-film-loop installations by a Canadian artist prominently featured in the current Whitney Biennial. Douglas's oblique thematic riffs are demanding, but the sombre poetry of his grainy black-and-white projections draws you relentlessly into his world of reverie and displacement. Through April 29. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St.)

Jessica Stockholder—Bracingly crazy assemblage sculptures, electric with color, featuring a wide variety of eccentric materials—plastic piggy banks, an old sweater, silicone caulking, yarn, etc. Though Stockholder labors to keep the now rather shopworn junk aesthetic fresh and vigorous, she doesn't really do much more than find new off-kilter ways to make things pretty. Through April 29. (Gorney, 100 Greene St.)

"Synaesthesia"—The cyberpunks have landed. For the inaugural show of the Mary Anthony gallery, the Pop painter Ronnie Cutrone has curated an exhibit of art from the wild frontiers of the Internet. In the most radical piece, Ken Feingold's "where i/blue," a motorized puppet—a gleaming, metallic version of Howdy Doody on wheels, with a video camera in its head—is trapped in a corral of mirrors; the visitor, at an adjacent monitor showing the puppet's point of view, shuttles the little robot around the space by manipulating a joystick. The effect is truly spooky. The show also includes dizzying Pop paintings by the Designers Republic and by John (Crash) Matos, macabre sculptures by H. R. Giger, and videos by virtual-reality pioneer Jaron Lanier and by self-styled glam-nerd Rob Roth. True to its title, "Synaesthesia" has a soundtrack, by Edgar David Grana and Art Weiss; the ambient electronic music is the aural equivalent of a Lava lamp. Over all the show is a hoot, and it has all the sensory excitement—and intellectual depth—of the latest video game. Through May 7. (Anthony, 589 Broadway. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

"Chocolate!"—You can't walk into Pearl Paint and pick up a pound of this artist's material, but from the look (and aroma) of this show, it wouldn't be a bad idea. (And for starving artists it beats eating gesso.) Sculptures, installations, and drawings by, among others, Marcel Duchamp, Joseph Beuys, Dieter Roth, Helen Chadwick, Karen Finley, Hannah Wilke, and Ed Ruscha. Through May 20. (Swiss Institute, 495 Broadway.)

Short List—**Carl Andre,** Cooper, 155 Wooster St. Through April 29. . . . **R. Crumb,** Cutler, 379 West Broadway. Through April 29. . . .

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MARK DI SUVERO, Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. Through May 27. . . . AUDREY FLACK, Meisel, 141 Prince St. Through April 29. . . . BETTY GOODWIN, Fawbush, 76 Grand St. Through May 13. . . . SEAN LANDERS, Rosen, 130 Prince St. Through May 20. . . . BYOUNG OK MIN, Sigma, 379 West Broadway. Through April 29. . . . MEL PEKARSKY, Einstein, 591 Broadway. Through May 26. . . . RONA PONDICK, Freire, 130 Prince St. Through May 20. . . . ELLIOTT PUCKETTE, Kasmin, 74 Grand St. Through May 13. . . . CLAUDE SIMARD, Shainman, 560 Broadway. Through May 13. . . . TERRY WINTERS, Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. Through May 20.

PHOTOGRAPHY

TINA BARNEY—New, funny, sometimes caustic pictures of the artist's family, this time loosely centered on couples. Through May 31. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

MARJORIE CONTENT (1895-1984)—Although she was a member of the Stieglitz circle and an intimate friend of Georgia O'Keeffe's, Content's photography was virtually unknown until recently. Her work is a compendium of early-twentieth-century styles: a 1932 photograph of a rock formation flirts with abstractionism, and elements of Cubism, Constructivism, and Neue Sachlichkeit show up in other pictures. Content's unpretentiousness gives the pictures their artistry; they're a testament to the power of modesty. Through April 29. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

ADAM FUSS—Photograms of stained-glass shards from fifteenth- through nineteenth-century windows, which seem to glow more richly than the originals. Under Fuss's pitiless stare, these objects of faith have all the spirituality of silicon chips. Through April 29. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

DOROTHEA LANGE (1895-1965)—"American Photographs" covers Lange's documentary work from the thirties through the fifties: pictures of the poor, the forgotten, the abandoned, and the racially stigmatized that are neither sloppy nor sentimental nor contrived. The show includes plenty of lesser-known images and offers new perspectives on the classics. Through April 30. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

SEBASTIÃO SALGADO—The Yancey Richardson gallery's inaugural show is a sampling from the "Workers" series, images of harvesters, miners, builders, and haulers from many countries. Through May 27. (Richardson, 560 Broadway. . . . ¶ A large exhibition from this series is at the International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8. Through May 26.)

AARON SISKIND (1903-91)—"Tar Pictures," the artist's last series: closeup views of streaks of tar on the asphalt roads of New England. Through April 29. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

BRETT WESTON (1911-93)—Selections from three portfolios: "Portraits of My Father," "Alaska," and "Oregon." Through May 13. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

SHORT LIST—TED DEGENER, Kind, 136 Greene St. Through May 6. . . . SALLY GALL, Saul, 560 Broadway. Through May 20. . . . BIRNEY IMES, Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. Through May 20. . . . YORGHOS KONTAXIS, O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway. Through April 29. . . . JEROME LIEBLING, Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. Through May 20. . . . INGE MORATH, Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. Through May 20. . . . HILMAR PABEL, Leica, 670 Broadway. Opens Saturdays at noon; through May 24. . . . ROBERT RIGER, Danziger, 130 Prince St. Through May 20. . . . MICHAEL SPANO, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through May 26. . . . DOUG AND MIKE STARN, Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. Through April 29.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Museum of the City of New York.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Spoils of War

THE musical impact of the Second World War continues to resound. This week the Boston Symphony plays a piece by Hans Krása, whose voice was stilled at Auschwitz (at Carnegie Hall, on April 26-27); the American Symphony Orchestra offers war-inspired works (at Avery Fisher Hall, on April 30); and the centennial of composer Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's birth is celebrated at Merkin Concert Hall (also on April 30).

Castelnuovo-Tedesco had achieved acclaim in his native Italy before fleeing to America in 1939. His quasi-impressionistic chamber works and tone poems were widely performed, and his opera "La Mandragola" had won the Italian National Opera Prize in 1926. Two years before that, his discovery of a notebook containing Hebrew cantillations copied out by his grandfather had reawakened his interest in his Jewish heritage, which became an ongoing musical influence. Although the most eminent musicians—Heifetz, Piatigorsky, Gieseking, Segovia, Toscanini—championed his concert music, most of his American work was destined for Hollywood: he wrote some two hundred scores for M-G-M alone, and passed along the secrets of his art to such pupils as André Previn, Henry Mancini, Nelson Riddle, and John Williams. Some have suggested that his inspiration peaked early and tapered off; Castelnuovo-Tedesco doubtless viewed it differently. "What I have sought to do, during my artistic evolution," he wrote, "has been to express myself with means always simpler and more direct, in a language always clearer and more precise."

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949.)

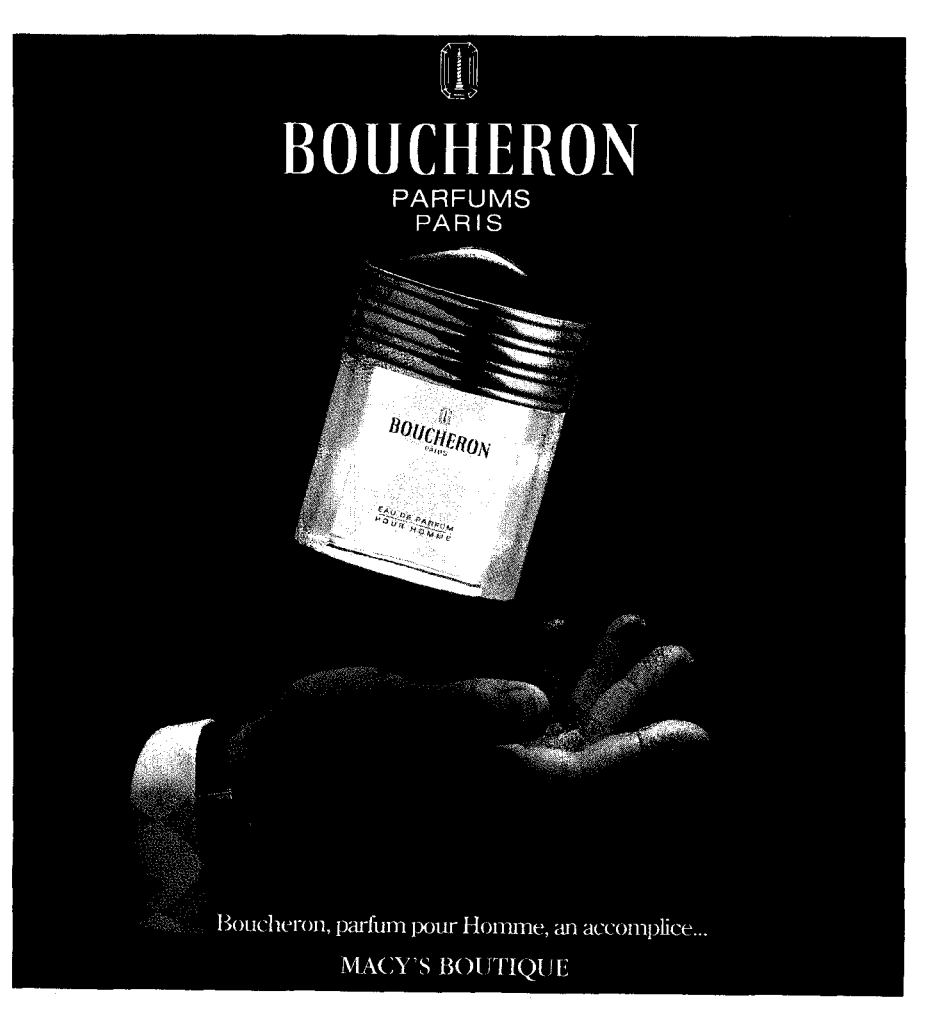
OPERA

OPERA EBONY—The resident opera company of 651 (the Brooklyn arts center) presents Noa Ain's "The Outcast," based on the Biblical story of Ruth. (Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. April 26 at 7:30 and April 28-29 at 8.)

MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC OPERA THEATRE—Presenting Otto Nicolai's "Die Lustigen Weiber von Windsor" ("The Merry Wives of Windsor"), featuring baritone Spiro Malas as Falstaff, and conducted by Sixten Ehrling. (Borden Auditorium, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802, ext. 428. April 26 and April 28 at 8, and April 30 at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—Seiji Ozawa conducts three concerts at Carnegie Hall. April 26-27 at 8: Hans Krása's Symphony for Small Orchestra (with mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt), Schumann's Piano Concerto (with Imogen Cooper), and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 3 (the "Polish"). . . . ¶ April 28 at 8: Fauré's incidental music to "Pelléas et Mélisande," Schoenberg's "Verklärte Nacht," and (with soprano



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Sylvia McNair) Ravel's "Shéhérazade" and Mozart's "Exsultate jubilate."

New World Symphony Orchestra—Michael Tilson Thomas conducts his orchestra in two concerts at Lincoln Center. April 28 at 8: Berlioz' "Roman Carnival Overture," Mahler's Symphony No. 1, and Mr. Thomas's own "From the Diary of Anne Frank" (with narrator Debra Winger). (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030.) . . . ¶ April 29 at 8: Ives' "The Unanswered Question," Ingolf Dahl's Saxophone Concerto (with John Harle), Lukas Foss's "Phorion," Michael Daugherty's "Lex," and Copland's "Symphonic Ode." (Alice Tully Hall.)

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra—The conductorless ensemble offers Mozart's "Idomeneo" ballet music, Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez" (with classical guitarist Pepe Romero), Davidovsky's Concertino for Violin and Orchestra (featuring Guillermo Figueroa), and Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4. (Carnegie Hall. April 29 at 8.)

American Symphony Orchestra—A concert of large-scale works representing musical currents of the years immediately following the Second World War: Honegger's Symphony No. 3 (the "Liturgique"), Strauss's "Metamorphosen" for Twenty-three Solo Strings, and Blitzstein's "Airborne Symphony" (with narrator James Earl Jones and the New York City Gay Men's Chorus). Leon Botstein conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. April 30 at 3.)

RECITALS

Hespèrion XX—The Catalan early-music group, featuring viola da gambist Jordi Savall and soprano Montserrat Figueras, performs Spanish and Italian music from the early seventeenth century, including works by Monteverdi. (Alice Tully Hall. April 27 at 8.)

Alan Feinberg—The pianist explores ways that early-twentieth-century composers put rhythm to imaginative use. His program includes music by Jelly Roll Morton, Cowell, and Nancarrow, as well as transcriptions of Gershwin's song improvisations. (Metropolitan Museum. April 28 at 7.)

New York Festival of Song—Presenting songs about women, by Nadia and Lili Boulanger, Brahms, Pauline Viardot, and others. (Weill Recital Hall. April 28 at 8.)

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco Centennial—A tribute to the Italian—and later American—composer. April 30 at 4: A symposium that includes comments by André Previn and the composer's son Lorenzo Castelnuovo-Tedesco. . . . At 7: A concert of the composer's solo, chamber, and choral works, with pianist William Wolfram, cellist Roberta Cooper, classical guitarist Emanuele Segre, harpist Susan Jolles, the St. Lawrence String Quartet, and the New York Concert Singers (directed by Judith Clurman). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719.)

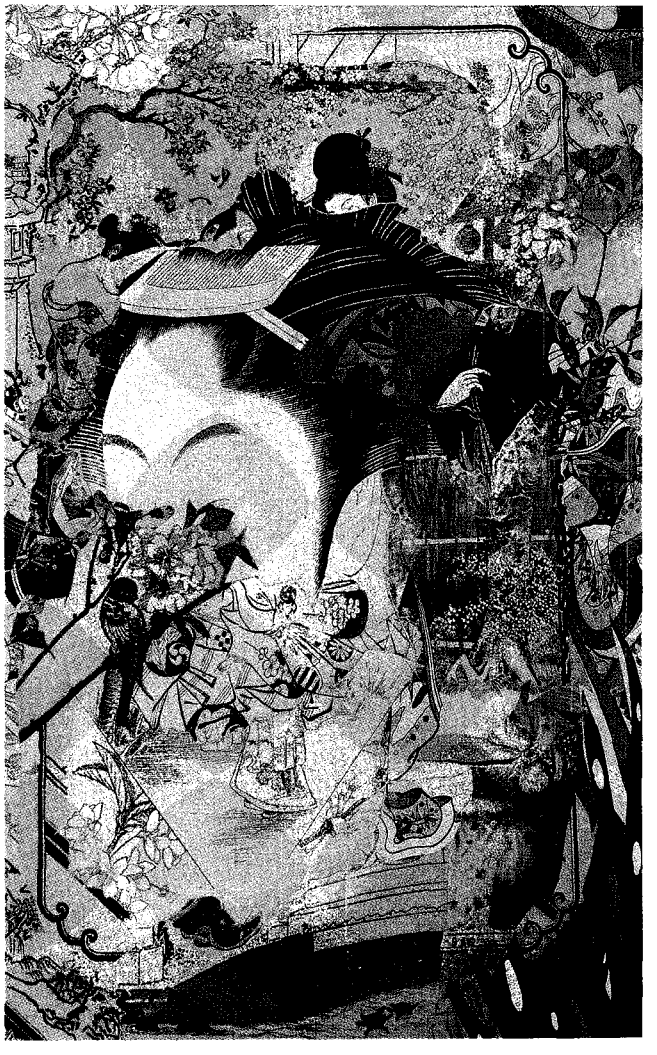
International Hugo Wolf Academy—The academy, which is dedicated to championing lieder recitals and promoting young song interpreters, presents an all-Schubert program. The roster includes soprano Benita Valente, mezzo-soprano Mitsuko Shirai, tenor Reginaldo Pinheiro, baritone Oliver Widmer, bass-baritone Peter Lika, and bass Cornelius Hauptmann, as well as the academy's director, the pianist Hartmut Höll. (Alice Tully Hall. April 30 at 7:30.)

KREMERata Musica—A chamber ensemble with violinist Gidon Kremer at its core, performing works by Mozart, Arthur Lourié, Sofia Gubaidulina, and Schnittke. (Carnegie Hall. May 1 at 8.)

Aleck Karis—The San Diego-based pianist, often heard in this town as the keyboard contingent of the Speculum Musicae contemporary-music ensemble, performs works by Stravinsky and Chopin. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. May 2 at 8.)

ALSO OF INTEREST

Little Orchestra Society: An all-Vivaldi program. (Alice Tully Hall. April 26 at 8.) . . . **Andrew Appel:** Harpsichordist, performing Bach's "Goldberg" Variations. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. April 26 at 8.) . . . **"The Manhattan Book of the Dead":** A new multimedia opera by David First, starring baritone Thomas Buckner. (La Mama Annex, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. April 27-30 at 7:30. Through May 7.) . . . **Bargemusic.** (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. April 27 at 7:30 and April 30 at 4.) . . . **Stephen Prutsman:** Pianist. (Metropolitan Museum. April 27 at 8.) . . . **Philharmonia Virtuosi.** (Metropolitan Museum. April 29 at 7.) . . . **New York Chamber Symphony:** Yoav Talmi conducting. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. April 29 at 8 and April 30 at 3.) . . . **American Composers Orchestra.** (Carnegie Hall. April 30 at 3.) . . . **Clarion Concerts:** Alessandro Scarlatti's 1717 oratorio "La Vergine Addolorata." (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. May 1 at 8.) . . . **Octets:** Two of the greatest, by Schubert and Mendelssohn. (92nd Street Y. May 2-3 at 8.)



Cherry blossoms at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

BRUCE HELANDER

ABOVE AND BEYOND

The Cherry Orchard—The cherry trees are in bloom. This weekend the Brooklyn Botanic Garden celebrates Sakura Matsuri, the Japanese cherry-blossom festival, with *taiko* drumming, bonsai, Zen archery, calligraphy, tea ceremonies, and other island arts. Many Japanese families plan visits to New York for the celebration, and one of the pleasures of the festival is wandering among them as they pose for snapshots by the pink and white cherry trees. (Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway. April 29-30, from 10 to 6. For more information, call 1-718 622-4433, ext. 215.)

Past Transit—At the New York Transit Museum and the Brooklyn Historic Railway Association's annual bus-and-trolley fest, nostalgic straphangers can ride an electric trolley, younger aficionados can school themselves at the museum's build-a-bus workshop, and "Honeymooners" devotees can board a bus like the one Ralph Kramden drove. (Boerum Pl. at Schermerhorn St. April 30, from 10 to 5. For more information, call 1-718 330-8601.)

Native New Yorkers—When ocean shad, in their annual spring migration, swim back to their brackish uptown birthplace, near 218th St. and Indian Road, in Inwood Hill Park, the Urban Park Rangers will be there, with environmental exhibits and the kind of live shad-fest entertainment that the younger fish may have come to expect. (April 30, from noon to 4. For more information, call 1-800 201-7275. The shad run continues through May.)

Readings—April 26 at 7: First novelists Kirsty Gunn ("Rain") and April Stevens ("Angel, Angel") read from their work. (*Limbo*, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ April 26 at 8: Kathy Acker ("Blood and Guts in High School") and Robert Glück ("Margery Kempe") read from their novels. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ April 28 at 6: The Poetry Society of America awards its Robert Frost medal for lifetime achievement to John Ashbery, and the poet presents a retrospective reading of his work. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. For reservations, call 254-9628.) . . . ¶ April 28 at 7: Louise Glück, Calvin Trillin, Scott Spencer, Kathryn Harrison, James Lasdun, and Russell Banks read from their work, at a benefit for *Columbia* magazine. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Talks—April 26 at 6: Nobel Laureate Kenzaburo Oe and his friend and translator John Nathan talk about the author's literary attempts to give voice to his mentally disabled son, Hikari. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015.) . . . ¶ April 27 at 6:30: Gowher Rizvi, the Asia Society's director of contemporary affairs, considers the conflict between modernists and fundamentalists in Islamic societies. (Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742.) . . . ¶ April 27 at 8:15: Novelist Alice Walker and playwright Anna Deavere Smith talk about controversy as inspiration. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ April 30 at 3: Historians Martin Duberman, Nathan Glazer, Arnold Rampersad, and John Kuo Wei Tchen, among others, join in a panel discussion about assimilation and cultural identity. (Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. No charge beyond museum admission.)

Tour—April 29 at 2: For the thirtieth anniversary of the city's landmarks law, Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger and Michael Adams lead a tour of Harlem's historic neighborhoods. For more information, call 534-1672, ext. 259.

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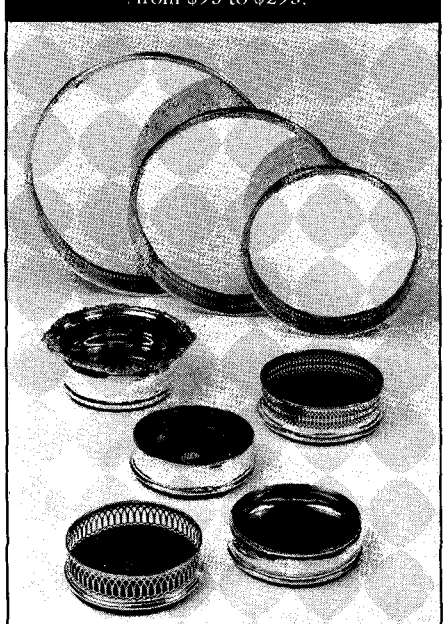


William Gropper, *A New Bill*, lithograph, 1941
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THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

THE DAY THE SUN TURNED COLD—Reviewed below in Current Films. Opening April 28.

DESTINY TURNS ON THE RADIO—In this romantic adventure set in Las Vegas, Dylan McDermott is an escaped convict trying to recover his loot and his lover (Nancy Travis). With Quentin Tarantino, James LeGros, James Belushi, and Bobcat Goldthwait. Directed by Jack Baran. Written by Robert Ramsey and Matthew Stone. Opening April 28. (Criterion Center.)

FRIDAY—Ice Cube stars in a comedy he cowrote (with D. J. Pooh) about life in South Central Los Angeles. With Chris Tucker. Directed by Gary Gray. Opening April 26. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

MOVING THE MOUNTAIN—A documentary by Michael Apted, about the Chinese democracy movement, featuring interviews with student leaders and archival footage of the 1989 events in Tiananmen Square. In Mandarin and English. Opening April 26. (Film Forum 1.)

PICTURE BRIDE—Reviewed below in Current Films. Opening April 28.

A PYROMANIAC'S LOVE STORY—When someone sets fire to a pastry shop, the busboy (John Leguizamo)—who loves the waitress (Sadie Frost)—vies with the owner (Armin Mueller-Stahl), the owner's wife (Joan Plowright), and a rich businessman's son (William Baldwin) to claim responsibility, in a romantic comedy written by Morgan Ward and directed by Joshua Brand. Opening April 28. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, Chelsea Cinemas, and Embassy 1.)

SEARCH AND DESTROY—In the painter David Salle's directorial début, Griffin Dunne plays an insolvent businessman intent on making a movie from a best-seller written by a late-night-cable-TV host (Dennis Hopper). With Christopher Walken, John Turturro, Illeana Douglas, and Martin Scorsese. Written by Michael Almereyda, from Howard Korder's 1992 drama of the same name. Opening April 28. (Angelika Film Center and Angelika 57.)

STARTING PLACE—For this documentary about contemporary Vietnam, director Robert Kramer returned to the land he covered two decades earlier in his film "People's War." In English and Vietnamese. Opening April 26. (Little Theatre.)

TOP DOG—Chuck Norris stars as a San Diego cop who cracks a terrorist ring with the help of his new partner, a mutt named Reno. Directed by Aaron Norris. Written by Ron Swanson. Opening April 28. (Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

TRUE BELIEVERS—Robert Mugge directed this documentary about Rounder Records, a twenty-five-year-old independent label known for folk music and blues. Opening April 28. (Cinema Village.)

THE UNDERNEATH—Steven Soderbergh ("sex, lies, and videotape") directs a remake of Robert Siodmak's 1949 film noir "Criss Cross," in which a long-absent son (Peter Gallagher) returns to Austin to attend his mother's wedding, hook up with his ex-wife (Alison Elliott), and commit a robbery. With William Fichtner, Adam Trese, Joe Don Baker, and Paul Dooley. Written by Sam Lowry from a screenplay that the late Daniel Fuchs based on Don Tracy's 1934 novel, "Criss Cross." Opening April 28. (Village Theatre VII and Lincoln Square.)

VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED—John Carpenter's new version of the 1960 British thriller, about a town beset by alien children, stars Christopher Reeve, Kirstie Alley, Linda Kozlowski, and Mark Hamill. Written by Carpenter and David Himmelstein, from John Wyndham's 1957 novel "The Midwich Cuckoos." Opening April 28. (Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses and phone numbers are listed on page 26.)

AMATEUR—In Hal Hartley's fourth feature, a lively and very peculiar sort of thriller, an amnesiac (Martin Donovan), an ex-nun (Isabelle Huppert), a porn star (Elina Lowensohn), and an accountant (Damian Young) are on the lam from a sinister European arms merchant. As usual in this director's movies, all the characters turn out to be running from themselves—from identities that have let them down. Hartley's Godardian manner is occasionally irritating, but Huppert's delicate, surprisingly witty performance keeps the picture grounded in recognizable human emotions. The movie is best seen as a comedy about the virtues of amnesia: in Hartley's world, waking up not knowing who you are is a blessing—even a miracle.—T.R. (4/17/95) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

BAD BOYS—A potential money factory from the producers of the "Beverly Hills Cop" movies, starring Martin Lawrence and Will Smith as a pair of Miami detectives who have four days to prevent a huge heroin score. The casting is shrewd but nervous: Lawrence, known for his physical and often sexually explicit comedy, plays a timid and faithful husband, while polite, sweet-faced Smith plays an oversexed loose cannon. The car chases are unimpeachable. Directed by Michael Bay.—S.K. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

THE BASKETBALL DIARIES—A movie based on Jim Carroll's 1978 memoir of his years as a New York City high-school basketball star turned heroin addict, with Leonardo DiCaprio as the diarist. Directed by Scott Kalvert. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Gotham Cinema, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

BURNT BY THE SUN—Nikita Mikhalkov stars in a film that he wrote and directed; set in 1936, it covers a day in the life of an aging Soviet revolutionary hero now living on a country estate. With Ingeborga Dapkounaite as his young wife and Oleg Menchikov as her former lover, an agent of Stalin's secret police. In Russian. (Eastside Playhouse, Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS—Although there isn't anything startlingly original in this tale of three Catholic girls falling in love in late-fifties Ireland, it gets a sweet telling in Pat O'Connor's pretty film. The first half, in particular, is amiable and well acted, especially by Minnie Driver, as the big, soft girl who lands the cute boy (Chris O'Donnell), and by Alan Cumming, who gives a funny, slithering performance as the opportunist who competes for her affections. The second half piles on the drama and gets mired in low-key intrigues. Still, there's a nice lilt to the proceedings.—B.D. (19th Street East 6, Coronet, Waverly, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

CLEAN, SHAVEN—A soulless, unlikable, and yet arresting film about a child murderer. The writer-director, Lodge H. Kerrigan, bleaches the color out of the poor rural areas that he shoots in and keeps the dialogue to a minimum. (The unnerving soundtrack, by Hahn Rowe—composed mostly of buzzes and ra-

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dio hiss—is worthy of David Lynch's great sound man, Alan Splet.) There's no plot; you just follow the killer (Peter Greene) around in his car until he's caught. Although the simultaneous tedium and creepiness suggest bad porn, there is something in the zombielike performances, cold skies, and occasional skin gouging that gets to you.—B.D. (Quad Cinema.)

Crumb—A documentary by Terry Zwigoff, about the underground-comics artist R. Crumb. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Film Forum 3.)

The Cure—One summer with a young neighborhood tough (Brad Renfro) and his new friend (Joseph Mazzello), a boy who has been ostracized because he has AIDS. Directed by Peter Horton. (First & 62nd Cinemas, East 85th Street, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

The Day the Sun Turned Cold—A gripping true-crime melodrama based on a 1988 incident in the blue-tinged frozen plains of northeastern China. Told in flashbacks, the story unfolds inexorably, like a harsh nineteenth-century novel. A young factory worker asks the police to look into the possibility that his father's death ten years earlier was caused by something his mother sprinkled in the soup. The vindictive son's motives are never satisfactorily laid out, and the other men remain mostly ciphers; as in "Madame Bovary," it is the woman—in this case a frumpy, uneducated seller of bean curd, beautifully and enigmatically played by Siqin Gowa—that you remember. Written and directed by Yim Ho. In Mandarin.—S.K. (Quad Cinema; starting April 28.)

Dolores Claiborne—The title character of Taylor Hackford's film is a middle-aged Maine housekeeper (Kathy Bates) who is suspected of having killed her boss and—years ago—her husband. Bates is superb, and the dark-toned cinematography (by Gabriel Beristain) is evocative, but by the end you feel about the movie the way Dolores feels about her life: that it looked good for a while and then somehow went terribly wrong. Jennifer Jason Leigh, as the heroine's sullen, petulant daughter, plays her scenes with a morose intensity that seems to suck the energy out of the picture. Screenplay by Tony Gilroy, from Stephen King's rambling novel.—T.R. (4/3/95) (Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, Baronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Don Juan DeMarco—A young man in a mask (Johnny Depp), who calls himself Don Juan and has been seducing every woman in sight, is put under the care of a psychiatrist (Marlon Brando); the doctor tries at first to cure the youth of his illusion and then begins to wonder whether there might be something to it. The writer and director, Jeremy Leven—himself a former shrink—has taken a heavy conceit and lightened it into comedy, which is what it deserves. Brando enjoys himself hugely, especially in his scenes with Faye Dunaway, who plays his wife. In defiance of the laws of gravity, the big man rises to the occasion and lifts the movie with him.—A.L. (4/10/95) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema II, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

A Goofy Movie—Disney's long-eared dog gets his own animated feature. Directed by Kevin Lima. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ Embassy; through April 27.)

Jefferson in Paris—Thomas Jefferson spent five years, beginning in 1784, as the American ambassador to France. This film, by the producing and directing team of Ismail Merchant and James Ivory, deals with his passion for French political reform during the approach of the Revolution, his ambiguous attitude toward slavery (exemplified in his alleged affair with a black maid, Sally Hemings), and his love for a married woman, Maria Cosway. The subject is so rich and engaging that it should be impossible to make a dull film about it; nevertheless, Merchant and Ivory have pulled it off. The period detail is numbing, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's script sounds like a stash of letters being read aloud, Ivory's direction is courteous and coy, and Nick Nolte's rough spirits have been dampened—nothing sparks between his Jefferson and Greta Scacchi's Maria, and the high point of his ardor for Sally (Thandie Newton) is the furtive unbuckling of a shoe. The only honors go to Gwyneth Paltrow, who plays Jefferson's impatient daughter. When she tears off her fancy wig and stuffs it into a vase, we know just how she feels.—A.L. (Paris.)

Jury Duty—A comedy in which Pauly Shore fulfills his civic obligation. Directed by John Fortenberry. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, 59th Street East Cinema, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Kiss of Death—David Caruso and Nicolas Cage star in a thriller directed by Barbet Schroeder and written by Richard Price. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

The Last Good Time—Armin Mueller-Stahl delivers a moving and subtle performance as Joseph, a retired violinist and lonely widower in Brooklyn; Olivia d'Abo is fine in the role of a twenty-two-year-old cool girl who needs a place to stay; Maureen Stapleton is poignant as Joseph's frail upstairs neighbor; and the great Lionel Stander, in his last film role, is hilariously lewd as the senile old friend Joseph visits in a nursing home. Bob Balaban and John McLaughlin based their script on Richard Bausch's 1984 novel, but the film has the thin beauty of a short story. It's hard to believe that this sentimental bouquet was directed by the same Balaban who made "Parents," a dark, heavily allegorical comedy about a boy raised by cannibals.—S.K. (68th St. Playhouse.)

New Jersey Drive—A drama written and directed by Nick Gomez, about a gang of teen-age car thieves in Newark. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

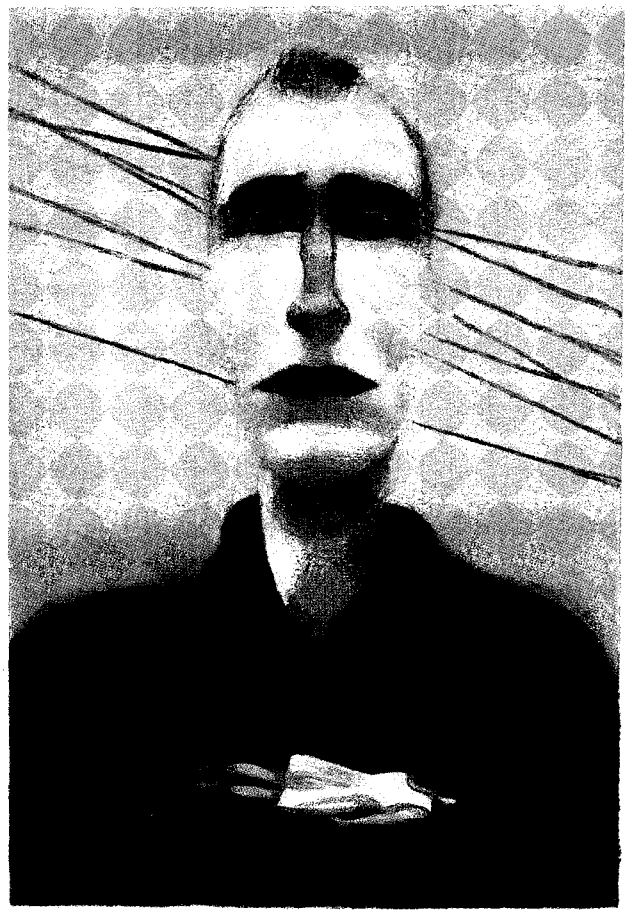
Outbreak—Wolfgang Petersen's biohazard thriller is a textbook example of Hollywood's ability to make something new look very old and very familiar. The screenplay invents a rain-forest virus called Motaba, which migrates from Zaire and runs amok in a Northern California town. But the filmmakers keep it contained—locked into an action-movie structure that reduces an unsettling subject to a predictable this-time-it's-personal conflict between a good-guy scientist (Dustin Hoffman) and a bad-guy general (Donald Sutherland). Also with Rene Russo, Morgan Freeman, Kevin Spacey, and Cuba Goodings, Jr.—T.R. (3/20/95) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Picture Bride—A nice-looking, earnest feminist lesson, about a young Japanese woman (Youki Kudoh) who enters into an arranged marriage with a sugarcane cutter (Akira Takayama) in Hawaii. The picture examines the historical role of the Japanese contract laborers and the limited choices available to the women who joined them; to whip these elements into a story, the director, Kayo Hatta, and her co-writer (and sister), Mari Hatta, added some Hawaiian folklore and a little Magic Realism. Not surprisingly, the characters (including a country bride and a city bride, a bitter Portuguese intermediary, and an aloof but kind plantation wife) are stereotyped composites of sociohistorical forces. Even as history, though, this film fails to answer the most basic question: what was it like to bend over all day in a hot field cutting sugarcane? In Japanese and English.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center and Sutton; starting April 28.)

Priest—Young Father Greg (Linus Roache) arrives in Liverpool ready to spread the word, but there are serious obstacles to his zeal: a laid-back, liberal colleague (Tom Wilkinson); a Catholic population that doesn't want to hear about original sin; and his own furtive homosexuality. Just when it seems that his troubles can't get worse, a young girl who is being abused by her father comes to him, and, forbidden to break the confidence of the confessional, he feels powerless to help her. The movie, written by Jimmy McGovern and directed, somewhat hysterically, by Antonia Bird, is almost comically determined to pile on the big issues and ethical wranglings that face the modern clergy. Angry and unfair, it wants to expose the hypocrisy of the Church without bothering to show how the institution really works.—A.L. (3/27/95) (Angelika Film Center, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Red Firecracker, Green Firecracker—An epic set in early-twentieth-century China, about a nineteen-year-old woman (Ning Jing) who has been raised as a man because she is the sole heir to a fireworks empire, and the artist (Wu Gang) she falls in love with. Directed by He Ping. In Mandarin. (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Rob Roy—Michael Canton-Jones's film about the eighteenth-century Scottish outlaw Robert MacGregor un-



LORENZO MATTOTTI

Peter Greene in "Clean, Shaven."

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easily straddles the line between swashbuckler and prestige picture. In Alan Sharp's screenplay, Rob (Liam Neeson) is a rugged, principled man at war with artful English fops (Tim Roth and John Hurt). This should make for rousing spectacle, but somehow it doesn't. With Jessica Lange as the hero's loyal wife, the picture is actually more effective as a conjugal-love story than as a ripping yarn. Although it's an agreeable movie, Caton-Jones's direction is too discreet—too civilized—to stir the viewer's blood. Even the glorious Highlands setting is disappointing; the cinematographer, Karl Walter Lindenlaub, gives the landscapes a subdued, overcast look. The film's heart is in the right place, but its eye isn't.—T.R. (4/17/95) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, Lincoln Square, and Metro Cinema.)

SWIMMING WITH SHARKS—When Kevin Spacey, as a movie producer from hell, tells an abused assistant to fetch, he oozes the sweet smell of success; his performance is a triumph of nastiness on a par with his decadent work as Mel Profitt in the old "Wiseguy" television series. But when his new assistant (Frank Whaley) decides to fight back and torture his boss, Spacey's character loses his fizz, and the movie becomes a revenge fantasy smothered by a colorless, driven twerp. Written and directed by George Huang.—B.D. (Village Theatre VII and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING—A romantic comedy in which a Chicago transit worker (Sandra Bullock) rescues an unconscious stranger (Peter Gallagher) from an oncoming train, and then, while he lies comatose in the hospital, is mistaken by his family for his fiancée. With Bill Pullman, Peter Boyle, Glynis Johns, and Jack Warden. Directed by Jon Turteltaub. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Guild, and Lincoln Square.)

WINGS OF COURAGE—Shriek as a light airplane flies out of the screen and clips you on the nose! Thrill to giant landscapes that unroll before your eyes! Sleep as the plot gets really boring! The first feature film to be made in Imax 3-D has to be watched through a special headset (satisfyingly chunky) and lasts forty minutes (gratifyingly short). Craig Sheffer plays a pilot in 1930 hired to fly mail across the Andes; he tries, fails, tries again, crashes, then walks the rest of the way, while his wife (Elizabeth McGovern) sits at home feeling worried. The flying scenes are big and bombastic, and the sound quality makes you feel as though a small chamber orchestra were sitting on top of your head. But instead of rethinking the shape of the drama to suit the format, the director, Jean-Jacques Annaud, has taken a small, simplistic plot, filled a couple of lonely roles with flat performers, and marooned them in the midst of a spectacle that is not so much a movie as a demonstration. With Val Kilmer and Tom Hulce.—A.L. (4/21/95) (Lincoln Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

APARAJITO: Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **BAR GIRLS:** Quad Cinema and Carnegie Hall Cinema. . . . **BLESSING:** Angelika 57. . . . **BLUE SKY** (reviewed in our issue of 10/3/94): Manhattan Twin. . . . **BOYS ON THE SIDE:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **BULLETPROOF HEART:** Cinema Village. . . . **BULLETS OVER BROADWAY** (10/24/94): Art Greenwich Twin. . . . **DOCTOR ZHIVAGO:** Lincoln Square. . . . **DUMB AND DUMBER:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **EXOTICA:** Angelika Film Center, 57th St. Playhouse, and Embassy. . . . **FARINELLI:** Village East Cinemas and Lincoln Square. . . . **FORREST GUMP** (7/25/94): Gemini. . . . **HOOP DREAMS** (10/17/94): Plaza and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . **IMMORTAL BELOVED:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **I.Q.** (12/26/94-1/2/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE LAST SEDUCTION** (10/24/94): Village East Cinemas. . . . **LOSING ISAIAH:** Embassy. . . . **THE MADNESS OF KING GEORGE** (1/16/94): Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **MAJOR PAYNE:** Chelsea Cinemas and Olympia. . . . **MURDER IN THE FIRST:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **MURIEL'S WEDDING:** Village East Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **ONCE WERE WARRIORS:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **PATHER PANCHALI:** 62nd & Broadway. . . . **THE PEBBLE AND THE PENGUIN:** Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Lincoln Square. . . . **PULP FICTION** (10/10/94): Village East Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Embassy. . . . **RED** (11/28/94): Cinema 3. . . . **THE SECRET OF ROAN INISH:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **STRAWBERRY AND CHOCOLATE:** Village East Cinemas and Sutton. . . . **STUART SAVES HIS FAMILY:** Tower East and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . **THE SUM OF US:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **TOMMY BOY:** Village Theatre VII, New York Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, and 84th Street Sixplex.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

EAST SIDE

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000).
LITTLE THEATRE, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171).
MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th (477-6600).
VILLAGE THEATRE VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th (982-0400).
CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th (924-3363).
VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, 2nd Ave. at 12th (529-6799).
19TH STREET EAST 6, B'way at 19th (260-8000).
MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th (689-6548).
34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th (532-5544).
34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th (683-0255).
EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 55th (755-3020).
SUTTON 1 AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th (759-1411).
GOTHAM CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 58th (759-2262).
PLAZA, 42 E. 58th (355-3320).
MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th (935-6420).
59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th (759-4630).
BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th (355-1663).
CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, 3rd Ave. at 60th (753-6022).
FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd (513-5408).
GEMINI 1 AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th (832-1670).
BEEKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th (737-2622).
NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th (744-7339).
68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th (734-0302).
TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st (879-1313).
EAST 85TH STREET, 1st Ave. at 85th (249-5100).
PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th (534-1880).
ORPHEUM VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th (876-2400).
86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th (249-1144).

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110).
WAVERLY 1 AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd (929-8037).
ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th (929-3350).
QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th (255-8800).
CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd (513-5402).
23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd (989-0060).
GUILD, 33 W. 50th (757-2406).
WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St., between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583).
ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th (765-7600).
57TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 110 W. 57th (581-7360).
CARNEGIE HALL CINEMAS, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th (265-2520).
ANGELIKA 57, 225 W. 57th (586-1900).
PARIS, 4 W. 58th (980-5656).
CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th (752-5959).
62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd (265-7466).
LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, B'way at 63rd (757-2280).
REGENCY, B'way at 67th (724-3700).
LINCOLN SQUARE, B'way at 68th (336-5000).
84TH STREET SIXPLEX, B'way at 84th (877-3600).
METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, B'way at 99th (222-1200).
OLYMPIA 1 AND II, B'way at 107th (865-8128).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, B'way at 44th (354-0900).
EMBASSY 1, B'way at 46th (302-0494).
EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th (730-7262).
ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way (869-8340).
NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th (869-0950).

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

GREED (1924)—"He can't make small of me!" the burly dentist McTeague (Gibson Gowland) screams at the San Francisco saloongoers who witness his best friend throw a knife at him. But McTeague's buddy, Marcus (Jean Hersholt), *can* make small of him, and does. The director, Erich von Stroheim, manages to make his characters small and big simultaneously. He uncovers creatures of the id buried in these avaricious men and in a woman who starts out as Marcus's girl and becomes McTeague's wife: the proper, increasingly miserly Trina (ZaSu Pitts). The three friends' twisted money lust and sexuality send them into a death spiral that ends with a nightmarish showdown in Death Valley. M-G-M's production chief, Irving Thalberg, had von Stroheim's epic adaptation of Frank Norris's 1899 novel, "McTeague," chopped to a quarter of its original nine-hour length, and the studio cut is the only version that has survived. But it remains the benchmark of movie naturalism—veracious and harrowing.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; April 28-29.)

THE MARK OF ZORRO (1920)—Douglas Fairbanks' first great acrobatic adventure set the standard for zesty swashbucklers. As Spanish California's masked avenger, with a foppish secret identity and a propensity for swooping down on his enemies out of nowhere, Zorro is Robin Hood, the Scarlet Pimpernel, and Batman rolled into one. Fairbanks didn't need a molded bodysuit or special effects to give the audience a charge: he did it with comic showmanship and physical exuberance. In Zorro's bouts with the evil governor and his minions, Fairbanks accents the play in swordplay and never merely runs when he can gambol; he leads bad guys on a merry chase. And if he's extravagantly cunning as Zorro, he's furtively cunning as the dandified Don Diego, especially when he acts the fool by courting the beautiful Lolita (Marguerite de la Motte) with parlor tricks. The solid cast includes Noah Beery and Robert McKim. Fred Niblo directed, from the story "The Curse of Capistrano," by Johnston McCulley.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; April 29 and May 1.)

REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE (1955)—As Jim, a high-school boy, James Dean was the archetypal misunderstood teen-ager in this generation-gap soap opera of the fifties, which had more emotional resonance for the teen-agers of the time than many much better movies. With Natalie Wood as Judy, Sal Mineo as Plato, Corey Allen as Buzz, Nick Adams as Moose, Dennis Hopper as Goon, Jim Backus and Ann Doran as Jim's parents, Virginia Brissac as his grandma, William Hopper and Rochelle Hudson as Judy's parents, and Ian Wolfe, House Peters, and Gus Schilling. Directed by Nicholas Ray; written by Stewart Stern and Irving Shulman, based on Ray's story; music by Leonard Rosenman; cinematography by Ernest Haller.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; starting April 28.)

THEY LIVE BY NIGHT (1948)—Nicholas Ray made his début as a director with this near-hallucinatory, hardboiled, expressionist version of Edward Anderson's too little known 1937 novel "Thieves Like Us." Ray presents the girl, Keechie (Cathy O'Donnell), and her young escaped-convict lover, Bowie (Farley Granger), as doomed innocents, trying to escape the forces pursuing them, looking for a refuge where their baby can be born. His tense choreographic staging and tightly framed compositions give the film a sensuous, nervous feeling of imminent betrayal. Yet this film-noir stylization, elegant in design terms and emotionally powerful, is also very simplistic; the movie suffers from metaphysical liberalism—social injustice treated as cosmic fatalism.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; April 29-30.)

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O. KARPINSKY

At the Walter Reade Theatre, a series of glasnost-era movies.

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea (1954)—Considering the inventive design of this science-fiction fantasy, its lapses into kid stuff are jarring—one minute you're gasping at a pioneer submarine that resembles a streamlined crustacean; the next you must tolerate Kirk Douglas's musical-comedy harpoonist singing "A Whale of a Tale." But this lavish Walt Disney production, which launched Hollywood's Jules Verne craze, remains eerily enjoyable. James Mason captures the melancholy as well as the megalomania of the vengeful genius Captain Nemo, who is trying (he says) to bring about world peace through terrorism. When Nemo enters a psychotic state as he prepares to ram a ship, he's Captain Ahab; when he shows off the natural magic of the ocean floor and the technological magic of his ship, he's an aquatic Prospero; and when he plays Bach's Toccata in D Minor on an extravagant pipe organ, he's the Phantom of the Opera, too. With Paul Lukas and Peter Lorre. Richard Fleischer directed, from Earl Felton's script.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; April 29-30.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—Through April 27: "A Matter of Life and Death" (1946, Michael Powell). . . . ¶ From April 28: "Rebel Without a Cause" (†).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)—April 26-28 at 8:30 and 10:15; April 29-30 at 4, 8:30, and 10:15; and May 2 at 8:30 and 10:15: "Starting Place" (1993, Robert Kramer; in English and Vietnamese). . . . ¶ A program of films directed by Barbet Schroeder. April 26-27 at 6: "More" (1969). . . . April 28 and May 2 at 6: "Single White Female" (1992). . . . April 29-30 at 6: "Barfly" (1987). . . . May 1: "The Charles Bukowski Tapes" (1984-87), Part One at 6 and Part Two at 8:15.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—April 27 at 2:30: "Sunrise" (1927, F. W. Murnau). . . . ¶ April 27 at 3 and 6: "The Iron Father" (1994, Ivan Rossenov). . . . ¶ April 27 at 6:30 and April 28 at 2:30: "The Big Parade" (1925, King Vidor). . . . ¶ April 28 at 2:30 and April 29 at 5: "La Mort du Jeune Aviateur Anglais" (1993, Benoît Jacquot; in French) and "Écrire" (1993, Jacquot; in French). . . . ¶ April 28 at 6: "Le Navire Night" (1979, Marguerite Duras; in French). . . . ¶ April 28 at 6:30 and April 29 at 2: "Greed" (†). . . . ¶ April 28 at 8: Three short films written and directed by Duras. . . . ¶ April 29 at 2:30: "Une Aussi Longue Absence" (1961, Henri Colpi; in French). . . . ¶ April 29 at 5 and May 1 at 2:30: "The Mark of Zorro" (†). . . . ¶ April 30 at 2:30: A program of short films by Walt Disney, Fernand Léger, and other artists. . . . ¶ April 30 at 2:30: "Moderato Cantabile" (1960, Peter Brook). . . . ¶ April 30 at 5: "Passion" (1919, Ernst Lubitsch). . . . ¶ April 30 at 5: "Nathalie Granger" (1972, Duras). . . . ¶ May 1 at 6 and May 2 at 2:30: A program of short surrealist films by Germaine Dulac, Luis Buñuel, and Man Ray. . . . ¶ May 2 at 5: "The Love of Jeanne Nay" (1927, G. W. Pabst).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—A series of Soviet films (features, documentaries, animated works, television shows, and video shorts) from the glasnost era (1985-91) is being shown. . . . ¶ April 29-30 at 2: "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea" (†).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—A program of films by Nicholas Ray. April 29-30 at 2: "They Live by Night" (†). . . . ¶ April 29-30 at 4: "In a Lonely Place" (1950).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Saturday-and-Sunday-night series of free films. On April 29 at 7, the feature will be Fannie Flagg's "Fried Green Tomatoes" (1991, Jon Avnet), with Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, Mary-Louise Parker, and Mary Stuart Masterson. On April 30 at 7, the feature will be "Mommie Dearest" (1981, Frank Perry), with Faye Dunaway.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 2 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Breathless" (1959, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean-Paul Belmondo and Jean Seberg.

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—April 27 at 8:30: "Ordet" (1955, Carl Dreyer; in Danish). . . . ¶ April 28 at 7 and April 29 at 8: Programs 9-10 from Bruce Elder's "The Book of All the Dead," a thirty-two-hour cycle of films. . . . ¶ April 28 at 9:30: "Strike" (1924, Sergei Eisenstein). . . . ¶ April 29 at 4: "Eunuch" (1987, Lee Doo-yong). . . . ¶ April 29 at 7: "Breathless" (1959, Jean-Luc Godard; in French). . . . ¶ April 29 at 9: "Potemkin" (1925, Eisenstein). . . . ¶ April 30 at 4: "The Way to Chongsong" (1990, Lee). . . . ¶ April 30 at 7: "Zorns Lemma" (1970, Hollis Frampton). . . . ¶ April 30 at 8:30: "October" (1927, Eisenstein).

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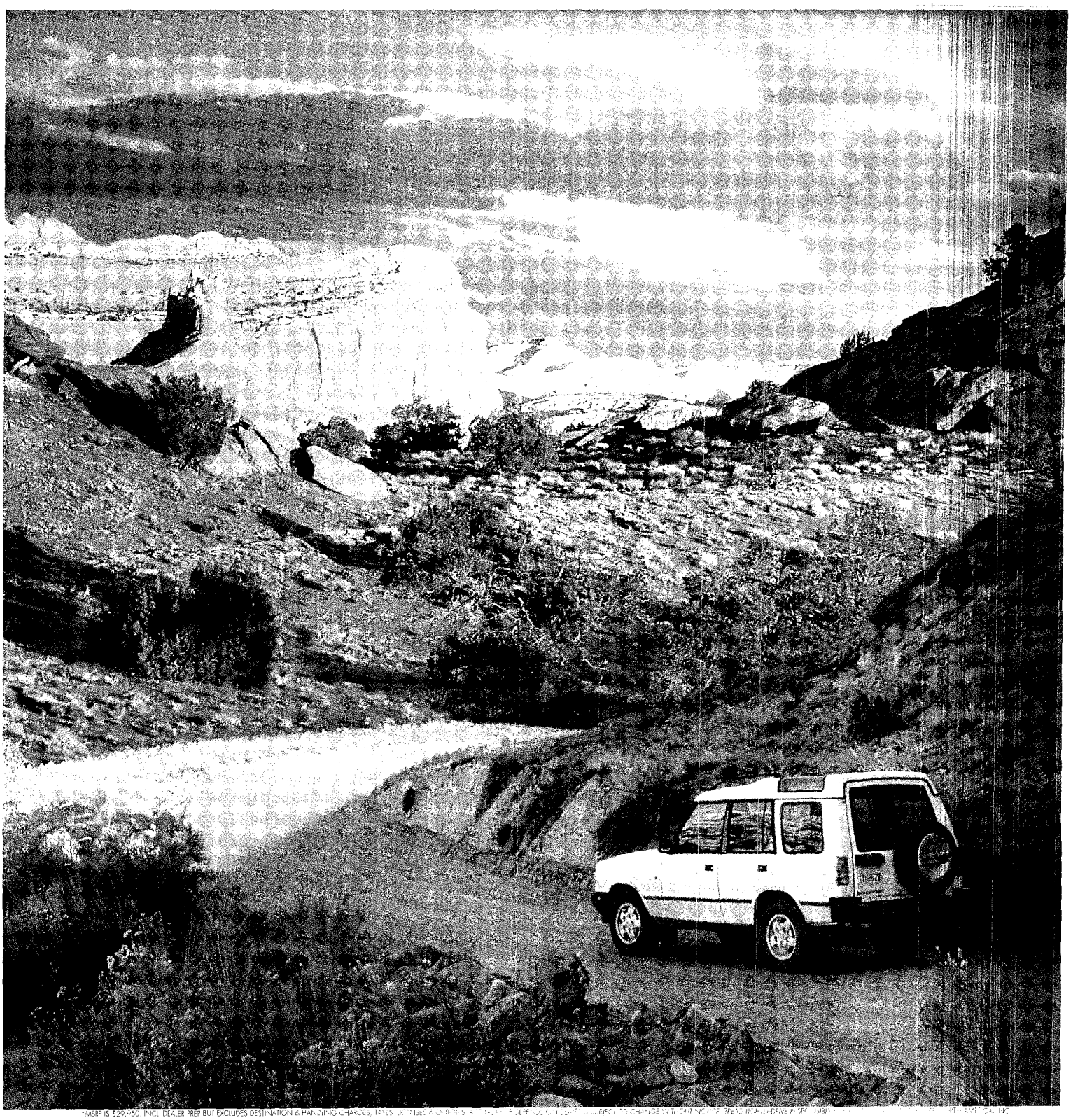
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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

PEOPLE, PEOPLE WHO NEED SQUIRRELS

A FLEETING thought: Instead of trying to get along with other human beings, why not just round up some squirrels and call it a day? Marilyn the Squirrel Lady is under the impression that she gets along famously with other human beings, but she may see less of them than of squirrels: she feeds the squirrels in Riverside Park, usually in the Seventies, five days a week—except, she says, when the weather is "icy." She's been feeding them for a year and a half now and has developed relationships. Marilyn doesn't reveal her last name. She wants to be known as Marilyn Ensis, a takeoff on *Sciurus carolinensis*, the generic name for gray squirrels. She's writing a biography of a squirrel, and she'll meet you in the Royale Kosher Bake Shop before starting on her rounds. If she hasn't had her coffee yet and is asked a question about a squirrel, she'll say in sort of a loud voice, "Let me have my coffee, *O.K.*?" Then there's a silence.



Marilyn has short, punkish yellow-blond hair, and eyeglasses that have faux-malachite frames with rhinestones on them. She is round, is past middle age, uses red lipstick, and wears a white parka over a black running suit. Marilyn says she was born in New York and has lived here all her life. "Not *everyone* has a Brooklyn accent to prove that," she says. She doesn't. After coffee, when she's asked how squirrels really live, she says, "I wouldn't know unless I went in with a reverse periscope." She goes on, with scorn, "It's *different* from a bird's nest. Squirrels decorate their nests with a knit glove or some such. With all the homeless, there's discarded fabric all around. If squirrels find a brown paper bag, they carry it home. You'll see them walking home as if they were out shopping."

On her way to the park, Marilyn clutches a bright-blue plastic bag filled with peanuts in the shell. "They don't kill senselessly," she says of squirrels. "They eat vegetation and nuts. They've got to be pretty darn hungry to eat insects. Famished to eat a bird. I've spent five hundred dollars on nuts this year." In a girlish moment, she says, "I have to control myself not to dip into the till here and open peanuts for *moi*."

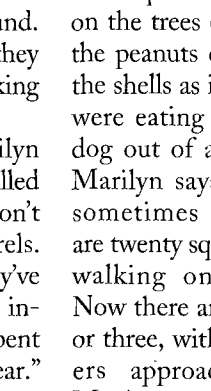
"Are the squirrel mothers nice to their children?"

"Wonderful disciplinarians. I've seen squirrels disciplined. They do get smacked around."

"Are you ever criticized for your interest in squirrels?"

"Some people say, 'Stop already. Get a dog.' The way people say, 'Get a life.' "

In Riverside Park, Marilyn becomes enthusiastic, as if fulfilled. She makes another person feel completely left out. She talks to the squirrels in a fairly loud voice: "Hey, *Rocky!*" But first she waits for potentially lethal dogs to pass by. Then she throws peanuts around and makes an elaborate combination of clicking noises, whistles, and yoo-hoos. Squirrels appear. So do nine pigeons. They follow her, and she turns her back on them. Of a squirrel next to her she says, "I know *this* one—it lives in the tree over there." To it: "Did you get beaten up that you're so shy today?" Two squirrels are hanging upside down on the trees eating the peanuts out of the shells as if they were eating a hot dog out of a bun. Marilyn says that sometimes there are twenty squirrels walking on her. Now there are two or three, with others approaching.





Marilyn is in a kind of ecstasy: "Look who's out! Hi, everybody!" One squirrel hangs from her glove. She says to it, "Eeky-deeky, eeky-deeky." Then she clicks, whistles, clenches her teeth, and says, "Hi, honey. Look who's on *me!* Yoo-hoo, everybody. Hi, puppy! *Eeky-deeky!*" Then, with a good amount of fury, she says to a human being, "You're not *looking* at me. *Look.*" A squirrel has climbed on her arm. "Hello, pretty girl." Another squirrel jumps on her shoulder bag.

Marilyn has snapshots of a particular squirrel—"That's my little boy," she says. Her best squirrel story, she says, concerns this squirrel, but she won't tell it. "It's *my* story. It's for the book," she says. "*You can't have it.*"

A TALE OF NEWT

EARLIER this year, when Susan Hill was trying to open a new abortion clinic in Jackson, Mississippi, she ran into a few difficulties. There were last-minute insurance contracts and security agreements to be signed, and there was a pile of urgent pink phone-message

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JARRETT HUDDLESTON

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slips—evidence that Jackson is home to some of the country's most vocal advocates of killing abortion doctors. But Hill wasn't fazed. Her for-profit company, the National Women's Health Organization, operates nine clinics nationwide, so she was familiar with pro-life blockades, and even the occasional arson attempt. And in this season of Republican ascendancy she has, she feels, a handy insurance policy: a five-by-seven photograph on her desk that shows her and two other women being embraced by an ebullient Newt Gingrich. She also has a story to add to what we already know of Gingrich's unconventional family. Hill wants to tell about how Newt had his daughter, Kathy, call her up for a job.

"THE story begins in April, 1989, when I went to Washington to participate in one of those big, half-million-strong pro-choice marches," Hill said recently. "Mary Farmer and Ann Rose, two of my consultants, went along with me." The day after the Sunday-afternoon march, the three women made their usual Capitol Hill rounds, giving encouragement to pro-choice legislators. Then they decided to "go annoy the hell" out of the leading anti-abortion congressmen, and their first choice was Gingrich. Hill, Farmer, and Rose, dressed as the successful businesswomen they are, introduced themselves as concerned constituents. "We just told him how happy we were to meet him," Hill said. "Ann pulled a camera out of her purse, and we asked if we could have a picture with him. Newt was flattered. He said 'Sure,' and began running his hand over his hair and hitching his pants up." While a staff member positioned the women for the picture and Gingrich got ready to pose with them, he asked Hill what her business was at the Capitol. Hill told him to wait until the picture was taken. "And then I looked Newt right in the eye, gave him my best Southern smile, and batted my eyelashes at him," Hill said. "I told him, 'Why, Newt, didn't you see us out on the street yesterday? We are the *abortion ladies*.' "

Gingrich was taken aback, but he kept on smiling, and invited the women to sit for a few minutes and chat. "We took advantage of the time he gave us to tell him all the problems we were having in our Columbus, Georgia, abortion clinic in particular and with our other clinics in general," Hill said. "Before we left, he asked us for our business cards." One of those cards read, "National Women's Health Organization—Raleigh, N.C.," and when Gingrich saw it he said that his daughter was moving to North Carolina and maybe he'd have her give Hill a call for a job.

Hill thought this was a joke. Her mother, a rock-ribbed Republican who answers phones for the Raleigh clinic, similarly thought a prank was being played on her when, two weeks later, someone phoned and said she was Newt Gingrich's daughter, calling about a job. Hill took the phone, and realized that the person on the other end was, indeed, Kathy Gingrich Lubbers—then twenty-six years old—calling from Atlanta. She said that she had always been interested in working in women's health, and that her father had recommended that she get in touch. Hill took the matter seriously ("Hey, who wouldn't want to have Newt Gingrich's daughter working for your abortion clinic?" she says), and on May 5, 1989, Lubbers turned up and spent the morning with Mary Farmer and Ann Rose, touring an Atlanta inner-city women's clinic, and then, over lunch, discussed various job opportunities.

NOTHING came of the talks, though, because Lubbers was about to move to Greensboro, North Carolina, which was not close enough to any of the clinics. But in 1992 she did declare herself a member of Republicans for Choice, and lobbied to remove the anti-abortion plank in the G.O.P. platform that her father had strongly supported. (She now runs a gourmet-coffee business.) Gingrich, though he has not returned calls on the subject, has said publicly that he respects his daughter's personal opinions. In May, 1994, however, fourteen months after an abortion doctor was gunned down outside a Florida clinic, he voted against the clinic-protection bill, which was designed to guard the lives of clients—and employees—of the country's abortion facilities. The bill passed anyway, but the killings continue.

"That's why I keep the photo here on my desk," Susan Hill said. "If any of these right-wing crazies manage to break in and get past our metal detector, I can still hold up the picture of me with Newt, like a cross before a vampire."

A BURNS BROTHER GOES WEST



RIC BURNS has shown just twenty minutes of his four-part documentary "The Way West," which will be broadcast on PBS on May 8th and 9th, to his older brother, the documentary filmmaker Ken Burns. "I saw exactly as much of 'Baseball' before it was done as he's seen of this," Ric said the other day in his office, on the Upper West Side. "We give each other space on our projects now and also maintain a respectful distance."

Distance is not what you'd expect from two brothers in their early forties who shared a bunk bed as children and whose films, like their goofy, early-Beatles hairdos, are so stylistically similar as to be indistinguishable. In Ric's "The Way West," as in Ken's "The Civil War," the camera pans around tawny daguerreotypes, giving them the feel of motion pictures. You've got your melancholic background music—those sad banjos and plaintive fiddles which make Burns films sound like episodes of "A Prairie Home Companion." And, of course, you've got your wizened old narrator grumbling throughout; in "The Way West," it's the columnist Russell Baker, who sounds like "The Civil War" 's David McCullough with a head cold.

The distance Ric refers to may actually have arisen out of Ken's benevolence. Ric was studying for his Ph.D. in English at Columbia, in 1985, when he became disenchanted and withdrew. Ken, who was just beginning work on "The Civil War," offered him a full-time job as a producer and writer on the project. Despite his title, Ric still saw himself as his brother's apprentice. "The first thing you learn as an apprentice is that you want to be the master," he said. "There was a lot of stressful but comic jockeying for position between the two of us—me constantly trying to push my way to the front and Ken just as energetically trying to keep his younger

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brother down." Halfway through the five-year project, Ric said, "I knew it would be the only project I would work on with Ken."

Before "The Civil War" had even aired, Ric started research for what would become "The Way West." (Along the way, he got sidetracked by the story of the Donner Party, and interrupted his research to shoot a short documentary on the subject.) The result is far from a nostalgic look at the travails of frontier life. "The Way West" is a decidedly dark, unromantic documentary about the suffering of Native Americans at the hands of the United States government.

In addition to telling what he calls "a completely true story" about this country's treatment of its native population, Ric had a personal motive in making "The Way West": to distinguish his work from his brother's by dwelling on what he calls his "instinct for catastrophe." He said, "Ken doesn't have it at all. And that's probably explained by nothing more than sibling rank. I've noticed that olders like stories of triumph and youngers like stories of disaster. I don't know why that is, but I'm sure there's some obvious and profound psychological reason behind it."

Two weeks ago, the National Endowment for the Humanities agreed to fund Ric's current project, a ten-hour documentary on the history of New York. His macabre sensibility notwithstanding, he promises that the film will be "a valentine."

POSITIVE THINKING

LATE last month, at a party that was intended to honor Sean Strub and, coincidentally, marked the first anniversary of *POZ*, Strub, the thirty-six-year-old gay activist and businessman who founded the magazine, announced, to the sound of gasps, that he was selling it. *POZ* is a life-style bimonthly for the H.I.V.-positive which typically features on its cover a good-looking or well-known H.I.V.-positive person, and, inside, an interview of the person by an established writer. Every issue also contains a photo essay, a hard-news piece, and a health-advice section. *POZ* also runs one of the strangest columns in American journalism: a page reproducing, with commentary, the latest lab report analyzing its publisher's blood. "It's

THEM AND US

THE true cliché that was uttered so frequently in the immediate aftermath of the murderous explosion last week at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, in Oklahoma City—"It's not supposed to happen here"—contained multiple shades of meaning. Implicit was the shock of recognition colliding with the shock of unrecognition. "It," of course, referred to the mass slaughter of innocents—an image previously beamed in from places where horror was routinely drained of its meaning by the application of the modifier "war-torn," another true cliché. "Here" was a synonym for balmier abstractions: "the heartland" and "Middle America." To make bigger headlines, you would have to blow up Hannibal, Missouri.



The world that I knew growing up in Oklahoma was a place of simple distinctions—them and us. When I studied United States history in high school, there were two assigned texts: a survey book and J. Edgar Hoover's "Masters of Deceit." When I studied Oklahoma history—a requirement—I recognized a protesting-too-much quality about the endeavor. "We know we belong to the land, and the land we belong to is grand," Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote, but until they came along we didn't have an official state song, perhaps because we didn't have much history to sing about. An accurate time line would start with Francisco de Coronado in 1541, skip to the Trail of Tears in 1838, and then to the land rush in 1889. Most of the settlers had been run off from someplace else, and disenfranchisement must have felt like a birthright. Statehood didn't come until 1907.

Oklahoma City became the capital three years later, a tribute to its central location rather than its indigenous charm. For a while, the big oil and gas discoveries seemed to be occurring everywhere else, but finally, in 1928, the Oklahoma City Field erupted. It was so prolific that three times during the nineteen-thirties the Oklahoma National Guard was called out to curtail production. By then, as well, drought and the Depression and armies of Joad families had become reality.

After Steinbeck published "The Grapes of Wrath," decades ticked by during which little happened that gave events in Oklahoma a wider resonance. For restless adolescents, that fact of life felt like a conspiracy—the fear that nothing would ever happen existed in counterpoise with our parents' anxiety that something actually would.

Last week, something finally did happen. The dust literally had not settled before fingers pointed, reflexively, in the direction of the Middle East—a vast, amorphous "them." Scattered throughout the Middle East are people with whom Oklahomans, especially, have a complicated relationship. The oil-and-gas boom of the nineteen-seventies and early eighties came courtesy of OPEC and the Islamic fundamentalists who brought about the fall of the Shah of Iran. When the bubble burst in 1982, it left a dual legacy—an Oklahoma economy that has never recovered and a confusion about the boundaries between "them" and "us." The startling news, last Friday afternoon, of the arrest of one white American suspect and the questioning of another deepened that confusion. Now the enemies seemed to be homegrown haters, not swarthy foreigners.

What has happened in Oklahoma is another history lesson, one that dawned in a heartbeat, and it bears a message that the rest of America now finally understands: all terrorism is local. —MARK SINGER

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very freeing," Strub says. "People don't have to ask me how I am. They know. They've read it in the magazine."

Strub believes that he has been H.I.V.-positive for sixteen or seventeen years. He now has AIDS. His face, which is Irish and elfin, resembles a little boy's until he shifts his angle slightly or the light changes, and then the pallor and the hollows prevail. "I just got my blood tests back, and I've got one T cell," he said on March 29th, the day before he announced the sale of *POZ*. "That gave me pause," he went on. "I question putting all my resources into this magazine—wondering what I can leave my siblings and my lover and my community." That night, Strub decided to sell, and, during a three-hour after-dinner meeting, hammered out the terms with George Slowik, the publishing director of *Out*, who will head a small group of new owners.

STRUB grew up in Iowa City, where his family has lived since the eighteen-forties. He says that he felt a sense of loss when he came out as gay, in 1978, and slipped through the small-town web. He went to Columbia College but dropped out in 1980, following a bout with hepatitis and a mysterious ailment that he now thinks may have signalled his H.I.V. seroconversion. He scored his first triumph as a businessman activist the next year, when he persuaded his friend Tennessee Williams to sign the initial fund-raising letter for the Human Rights Campaign Fund, a gay lobbying organization. In 1984, he started a direct-mail company, which soon targeted gay and lesbian households. It was an unexploited field, and eventually, with the money he earned from his mail-based business and its rentable database, he produced an Off Broadway show ("The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me") and ran (unsuccessfully) for Congress. He also, with the added proceeds of a couple of cashed-in life-insurance policies, started *POZ*.

POZ prints a hundred thousand copies of each issue, and two-thirds of them go out free. Strub estimates that only a quarter of its readers are H.I.V.-positive—the rest are friends and relatives of those who are, or health-care providers, or, he says, "just people who like magazines." He reports being pleasantly surprised by the newsstand sales (they average roughly ten thousand copies an issue) but disappointed by the number of advertising pages. Unlike mainstream magazines, which can cushion grim editorial copy in a fluffy matrix of fantasy-based ads, *POZ* ads are for companies that buy the life-insurance policies of the terminally ill; for nutritional supplements and dandruff shampoos; and for treatments for CMV retinitis, mycobacterium avium complex, and other AIDS-related ailments. "A lot of advertisers don't want to associate their brand names with a disease," Strub says. "One day, *POZ* will probably run an ad for a car company. What a statement of support—to assume that someone with H.I.V. will live long enough to make car payments!"

Underlying *POZ* is the conviction that an H.I.V. diagnosis is not an instant death sentence. "I've been H.I.V.-positive all my adult life," Strub says. "Everything I've accomplished I've accomplished as an H.I.V.-positive person."

LAST KNIGHT

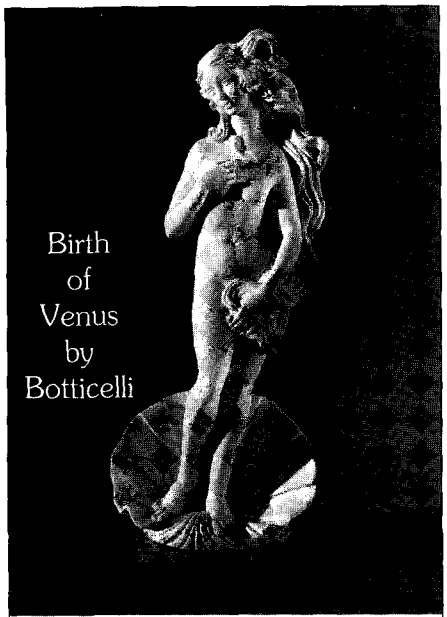
A MERRY, gossipy luncheon at the Knickerbocker Club. Host: Ashton Hawkins, the executive vice-president and counsel to the trustees of the Metropolitan Museum. Guests of honor: the Knight of Glin, a.k.a. Desmond John Villiers FitzGerald, of Glin Castle, County Limerick, Ireland, and his wife, Olda. Other guests: Brooke Astor and Annette de la Renta, who, as benefactors of the Met, have been plotting with Hawkins various ways to celebrate the ongoing hundred-and-twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the museum. A curly-haired, blue-eyed man in his late fifties, FitzGerald is the twenty-ninth, and the last, Knight of Glin. (He and his wife have three daughters but no sons, and the title doesn't descend in the female line.) He had come to town for celebratory reasons of his own—the publication, by Abrams, of a new book by him and the art historian Anne Crookshank, entitled "Irish Watercolors and Drawings."

At the Knickerbocker, the Knight and his group spent much of their lunch catching up on news of old friends in an assortment of outposts of civilization—Palm Beach, Portofino, Mount Desert. The prize for the most exotic item of gossip went to Hawkins, who, as a part-time resident of the Greek island of Patmos, will take part in a grand commemoration, in late September, of the nineteen-hundredth anniversary of the writing of the Book of Revelation by St. John the Divine in a rocky cave on the island. If none of Hawkins's guests could match that item for age or theological awesomeness, however, the Knight scored a valorous second best with an account of the American misadventures of one of his great-grandfathers, the fourth Earl of Dunraven, who was a noted Victorian sailor, hunter, fisherman, and author. With Buffalo Bill Cody as one of his guides, the Earl explored the Far West in the eighteen-seventies and, filled with admiration for several thousand acres of land in Estes Park, Colorado, decided to buy it up and turn it into a private hunting preserve. A scattering of locals, including some well-armed squatters, had a different notion of what to do with the land, and eventually the Earl sold it and beat a tactful retreat, never to return, but leaving behind a few nomenclatural souvenirs—Mt. Dunraven, Dunraven Pass, and Dunraven Glade.

The most important souvenir, however, was not a name but a picture that Lord Dunraven commissioned Albert Bierstadt to paint of the Rockies, for which the artist was paid fifteen thousand dollars. The picture hung for many years in the Earl's Irish home, and on his death he left the painting to his daughter, who presented it, in turn, to her nephew, the twenty-eighth Knight of Glin, father of the present Knight. When the twenty-eighth Knight died, his widow sold the painting for five thousand dollars to help pay for her young son's education. The current Knight remembers sitting for hours in front of the painting during his childhood years at Glin, daydreaming about cowboys and Indians and Buffalo Bill. The painting now hangs in the central Denver Public Library, but the Knight has never visited it there. "I remember it too well, and too sadly," he said, sipping a postprandial glass of mineral water. "I was happy enough to go to Harvard, but I must admit. . ." Upon which he breathed a gentle sigh, and the other guests at the table shook their heads in silent, well-bred commiseration. ♦

This week's contributors: Alison Rose, Marc Cooper, Warren St. John, Arthur Lubow, Brendan Gill.

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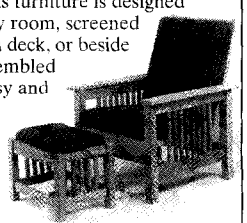
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DEPT. OF SECOND THOUGHTS

LOURY'S EXODUS

Glenn Loury was an intellectual hero of the Reagan right until his double life brought him down. Now he's returning to the policy fray—with a new creed.

BY ROBERT S. BOYNTON

"Just kick it in, man. Don't make me shoot you." The mugger spoke soberly, his words sounding less like a threat than an appeal to reason. He stood across from Glenn Loury, with his right arm hidden in the folds of a long leather overcoat, which covered a bulge just big enough for a gun. It was 3 A.M. on a bitter winter night. A light snow was falling as the two faced each other in front of a well-known drug dealers' den in Boston. A few minutes before, Loury had withdrawn all the cash that his bank card's twenty-four-hour limit allowed, and bought three packets of cocaine. When he was accosted, he was heading for his car—a Saab, practically the standard-issue vehicle for Cambridge intellectuals—and was looking forward to the warm glow of a freebaser's pipe.

Now two thoughts ran through Loury's head: Does he *really* have a gun? Do I *have* to give up the drugs? He tried staring back blankly, as if he didn't understand the colloquial phrase "Kick it in." At this, the mugger grew more insistent, edging closer and unbuttoning his coat with his left hand to display a dull-gray pistol in his right. Aware that time was running out, Loury had another thought: If I can get him to take only one packet, I can keep the other two. It was a calculated risk, but such thinking came easily to him—after all, he was a Harvard economist.

He fingered a packet and tossed it to the ground. The mugger, with his gun still trained on Loury, picked it up slowly and walked off. Loury made his way shakily to the Saab and prepared the drugs. He lit up and inhaled deeply. The sweet fumes rushed into his lungs; he needed the high now more than ever.

In March, 1987, just nine months earlier, Loury had reached the pinnacle of his career: he had been chosen to be Deputy Secretary of Education. A Harvard professor for the previous five years, he was a darling of the political right for his vehement criticism of affirmative action and other liberal programs. His basic argument was that the nation was facing "a new American dilemma"—as he wrote in a 1984 *New Republic* essay of that title—in which "the social disorganization among poor blacks, the lag-



Loury: Should the message of black self-help be delivered by this messenger?

RICHARD MERKIN

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ging academic performance of black students, the disturbingly high rate of black-on-black crime, and the alarming increase in early unwed pregnancies among blacks now loom as the primary obstacles to progress." His belief that African-Americans' destructive behavior, and not white racism, was responsible for their plight quickly brought him access to the pages of *Commentary*, *The Public Interest*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. Neoconservatives like Irving Kristol and Norman Podhoretz—the house intellectuals of the Reagan era—welcomed him into their salons. Invitations to state dinners at the White House followed.



In addition to a keen intelligence and a forceful style, Loury had an impressive Horatio Alger background. Reared on Chicago's rough South Side, he had earned a B.A. from Northwestern and an economics doctorate from M.I.T. Harvard's tenure offer came when he was only thirty-three. His scholarship was rigorous and eloquent, he was personally charming, and, most important, he was black. When Secretary of Education William Bennett tapped Loury to be his deputy, he was poised to become the Reagan Administration's second-highest-ranking African-American. With two years left in Reagan's second term, Bennett would be giving Loury a bully pulpit from which to push a conservative agenda in favor of school choice and against affirmative action. Because his writings promoted self-help and family values, Loury seemed the ideal spokesman to inform black America that, despite rumors to the contrary, it had a friend in the Republican Party.

Then, on June 1st, Loury mysteriously withdrew his name from consideration, offering vague "personal reasons" as the only explanation. The timing was particularly odd because he had already successfully weathered some damaging revelations: that he had fathered an illegitimate son while he was married to his first wife, that he had paid only sporadically for the son's support, and that he had been late in repaying student loans. Although these discoveries were certainly embarrassing, William Kristol, who was one of Bennett's closest advisers and had been a friend of Loury's since 1984, when both taught at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, had assured the White House that he was still "confirmable." Something else had to be responsible for his withdrawal.

Three days later, assault charges were brought against him by a twenty-three-year-old Smith graduate, who—unbeknownst to Loury's second wife, Linda, an economics professor at Tufts—had been living at his expense in a Boston apartment. The telephone was registered under his name; local papers called it a "love nest." The woman, who showed up in court wearing a neck brace, accused him of dragging her down four flights of stairs, shredding her clothes, and throwing her books and papers out the window. (The charges were eventually dropped.) Then, in late November, he was arrested for possession of marijuana and cocaine. On searching his car, police found a homemade pipe. A local reporter chanced on the arrest while reading the police blotter, and within days the story had been picked up across the country. Loury was again in the news, this time with potentially career-stopping headlines. As court dates and drug buys swirled around him, Loury was emerging as exactly the kind of person he had warned black America to avoid: a violent, irresponsible, drug-using womanizer who put his own pleasure above the demands of his career and the needs of his family.

In the years following Loury's run-ins with the law, he maintained a low profile, attending Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous meetings, finding religion, and patching up his marriage. After moving from Harvard to Boston University, in 1991, he threw himself into the technical economic theory that had first distinguished him within the profession, eschewing the provocative writings on race that had gained him notoriety outside it. For a few years, he simply didn't talk about race; he says he doubted that he would ever again have the stomach to withstand attacks from critics who had accused him of being a sophisticated Uncle Tom, an apologist for white racism, and worse.

Over the last three years, however, Loury has slowly reëmerged from his self-imposed exile. Giving a lecture here, publishing a paper there, he has tempered his message to account for the personal pathologies that once influenced his thinking. A lot has changed in racial politics since he went underground. With the Newt era in the ascendant, many ideas that once seemed reactionary have attracted a following across the political spectrum. Now that Loury's arguments about the importance of intact families and the role of behavior in the formation of the underclass don't sound quite so radical, he hopes that his diagnosis may receive a second hearing.

There are many who believe that he simply has no credibility. "Glenn Loury is just another pathetic mascot for the right," says Martin Kilson, a Harvard professor of government and a longtime defender of affirmative action. "He pompously hands down critical prescriptions from on high about stuff he doesn't know anything about. He's a hustler, an intelligent hired hand." The New York University law professor Derrick Bell, who often clashed with Loury when they were both teaching at Harvard, agrees. "Even given the fact that *all* blacks have to engage in some hypocrisy just to survive in our racist society, Loury has gone beyond the call of duty," he says. But Loury has defenders as well. "Glenn refuses to view the black experience exclusively through the lens of oppression," Shelby Steele, the author of "The Content of Our Character," says, and the critic Stanley Crouch is hopeful about Loury's prospects. "Look, a lot of people smoke crack and have kids out of wedlock and *don't* have anything important to say," he says. "For all his foibles, Glenn Loury does."

Loury, in what he says is an effort to reclaim his voice, has put together his first book, a collection of essays entitled "One by One from the Inside Out," which is to be published next month, by the Free Press. In it he attacks the shibboleths of American liberalism, taking on subjects like affirmative action, black anti-Semitism, political correctness, and liberal racism. He remains a fierce critic of the civil-rights establishment, arguing that in the "post-civil-rights era" black leaders should concentrate on economic strategies for relieving black poverty instead of pursuing strategies of protest and legal restitution, and that the solidarity of black liberals (what he calls the "loyalty trap") blinds them to harmful aspects of black behavior and leads them to censure blacks who are will-

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ing to talk openly about those problems.

He also writes about religion, a topic that has become increasingly important to him since 1989, when he was "born again." After a life spent relishing the twin pleasures of personal hedonism and professional success, Loury says, he has found more authentic fulfillment through faith even as he has discovered a profoundly illiberal truth: "My pursuit of personal freedom—my constant quest to be free of constraint, to be unfettered—has been the source of much of my unhappiness." Only religion, Loury contends, provides the emphasis on work and character which is so desperately needed in America's ghettos. To synthesize the best of black nationalism and Christian morality, he has proposed a hybrid that he calls Christian Nationalism. "I have a certain affinity to the principles of black nationalism, like the mutual obligation of African-Americans to bond together," he says. "As a Christian I believe the decline in traditional values requires a religious antidote. Christian Nationalism may be a way to achieve both aims. There is a genuine cultural affinity between blacks and conservative Christians, aside from the kooky Pat Robertson types. Blacks have a good deal more in common with them than with the A.C.L.U., or the Jewish liberal intelligentsia. We should find ways of exploiting it."

As a response to the corrosive spiritual nihilism that critics like Cornel West have diagnosed as afflicting black America, Christian Nationalism, Loury hopes, can foster the values of self-help and self-discipline, which will enable African-Americans to take control of their fate. Alarmed that the most visible advocates of these traditional virtues are nationalists like Louis Farrakhan and his followers, Loury wants to disengage the moral lessons from the xenophobia and bigotry that mar organizations such as the Nation of Islam. He credits the truth of the Gospels with his own spiritual emancipation, and believes that it can help others. His book's last line is "No Jesus, no peace."

In conversation, Loury frequently makes use of the confessional mode, freely testifying to his past failings with bittersweet resignation. His is a familiar narrative: modest origins; adversity overcome; success by dint of hard work; moral lapses; and—the aesthetic closure that is the exclusive property of those who have found religion—evangelical redemption. Depending on the particular years he emphasizes, Loury seems less a "new" man than an entirely different one.
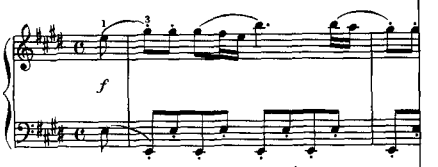
Despite these shifting personas, his self-interpretation is consistent. "That was then, this is now," he says. "Judge me by who I have become, not by who I was." In spite of his evident transformation, however, the question remains: Should the message of black self-help—the gospel of character and family values—be delivered by this messenger?

WHEN the news of Loury's troubles emerged, his associates at Harvard were stunned. That day, he had co-taught a political-economy seminar with Robert B. Reich, who is now the Secretary of Labor. "I had never seen Glenn so brilliant and lucid," Reich said at the time. Given the cozy collegiality of an institution where professors easily drop partisan ideologies and team up to teach courses in leadership and government, it is striking that even Loury's closest friends never suspected that his life was careering out of control. How could we have been so blind, they have since asked themselves, as not to see signs of his distress?

Although Loury advocated integration as a strategy for healing society's racial wounds, he had kept the two sides of his own life strictly separate. By day, this conservative Republican was, in his own words, "the resident naysayer in the chorus of amens of the Kennedy School's soft left-of-center liberalism," and its only tenured black professor. By night, he led a different existence: frequenting Roxbury's seediest night clubs, using drugs, picking up women. He was riding high—"a superman, the center of the universe," he says.

To Loury, the chasm separating his personal behavior and his moral prescriptions was not a flaw but a point of pride: he took satisfaction in the ease with which he passed back and forth between the two worlds—a maneuver that he told himself would have been impossible for any of his colleagues, black or white. "I could argue policy with a black intellectual like Chris Edley during the

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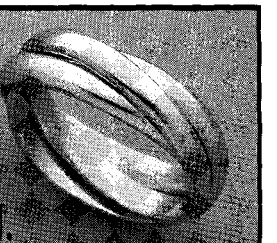


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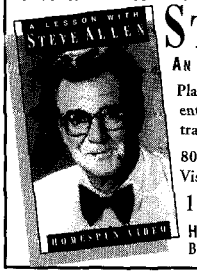
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day," he says, referring to the Harvard law professor who was until recently the deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget, "and that night enter a world he knew absolutely nothing about." Like his colleagues, Loury was a certified intellectual; unlike them, his urban origins gave him a connection to the streets, a trump card he often used to win arguments. He knew—he had *been there*. What good were all the advanced degrees in the world against someone who had actually experienced the ills of the underclass? "Don't give me that shit," he would say. "I'm from Chicago." In his view, his experience gave him a more "authentic" sense of his racial identity than was available to other black professors. This was especially ironic since Loury was notorious for attacking the notion that there was any single way of being black: an expert at deconstructing the rhetoric of "comparative blackness," he would skillfully reveal the covert ideological loyalty tests it concealed. Now, as his life's once separate spheres collided, the impact shook the black intellectual world. His enemies saw his fall as confirming the hypocrisy that they had always suspected; for his admirers it was a genuine tragedy, a result of the terrible pressure that he had been subjected to for telling African-Americans truths they didn't want to hear. For his part, he felt humiliated, exposed. "I just wanted to die," he says.

THE South Side of Chicago, where Loury was born, in 1948, has the largest concentration of African-Americans in the country. Stretching across twenty square miles, from the downtown Loop to Hyde Park and then on to the city's southernmost edge, it contains dozens of neighborhoods, representing all economic strata. Early on a brilliant, freezing February morning, Loury and I sped through the city on a six-lane interstate highway. To the left were the infamous Robert Taylor Homes, a series of hulking, crime-ridden projects punctuating the horizon as far as the eye could see. To Loury, they represent the worst problems of black America—a dying community, trapped by liberal policies and unresponsive to the cures prescribed by misguided social programs. "I was afraid to go there even back in 1965," he says.

Five miles south of the projects is Park Manor, the working-class enclave where Loury grew up. Predominantly white until the nineteen-forties, it was all black by the late fifties and remains so today. Block after block, well-kept one- and two-family houses perch on sloping lawns behind tidy rows of hedges. Loury, the older of two children, lived here with his mother, his sister, and his stepfather. Although Park Manor itself is quite safe, one has only to cross the nearby highway to find some considerably less desirable areas. Loury was surrounded by a sprawling working-class family, but the world of petty crime and casual drug use common in any poorer neighborhood was not far away.

Loury's family is a study in contrasts. His father was a successful civil servant with the Internal Revenue Service who went to law school at night; his mother's brother, Uncle Adlert, was an assistant state's attorney—a conservative Republican—who had attended law school with Chicago's future mayor Harold Washington. "Whereas a lot of educated blacks of Adlert's generation were fiery nationalists and anti-system, he always saw the logic of playing the angles and working within the system, playing the game," Loury recalls. "These other guys were always talking about stuff that just wasn't going to happen—like the revolution—while he would tell me about the law and how to work it *to your advantage*. That appealed to me."

Another uncle has some twenty-five children, by three marriages and a handful of other relationships; a great-aunt of Loury's owned several apartment buildings but sometimes fenced stolen goods from her back porch to make extra cash. "My family spanned the entire continuum of engagement with conventional society," Loury says. "And although I was on the most conventional end of it, I was nevertheless intimately connected to the rest."

Neighborhood kids divided themselves into the "Gousters" and the "Ivy Leaguers"—designa-



"You wear too many clothes."

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tions that indicated more about styles than gang allegiances. "The Gousters wore knit shirts, wing-tip shoes, and baggy pants," Loury recalls. "They were slick, bad, cool. Really good dancers, always in trouble and getting girls pregnant. We Ivy Leaguers wore V-neck sweaters, button-down shirts, penny loafers, and tapered slacks. We were supposed to be square and soft. Couldn't fight, couldn't dance—good boys. But, of course, we got girls pregnant, too." Indeed, Loury had two children by his girlfriend when they were teen-agers. They eventually married, but separated after five years.

As was true in many black communities in the sixties, the fervor of black nationalism was in the air. One of Loury's maternal uncles often went to hear the rousing speeches given by Elijah Muhammad, the head of the Nation of Islam. The same uncle left Loury a collection of Malcolm X's recorded speeches. One cousin changed his name to Thabiti to follow the nationalist poet and activist Haki Madhubuti. Within his family, Loury was known for his intellectual precocity, and when he was fourteen a cousin gave him a copy of the anti-Semitic "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and told him, "It's time you learn the truth about what *the man* is doing to our people." Although Loury was impressed by the nationalist rhetoric, he was skeptical, too. "I was always a little soft on that stuff," he says. "I wasn't as radical as I was supposed to be, and that disappointed some people in my family."

An outstanding student at the interracial Harlan High School, Loury graduated at sixteen. After a brief stint at a local technical college, he quit to work in a printing plant to support his young family. Three years later, he won a scholarship to Northwestern, and this time he found that he was excited to be a student.

Within a year, Loury was taking graduate courses in mathematics and economics. Soon he was on his way to M.I.T., which had perhaps the finest Economics Department in the country, to study with Robert M. Solow and Paul Samuelson. As the department's star student, Loury quickly became Solow's protégé. "Glenn was an extraordinarily bright student, absolutely first class," Solow says. "There is no doubt in my mind that had he continued in economic theory he had the talent to win the Clark Medal"—an award that is considered a prelude to a Nobel Prize in Economics. Loury was further to the right than most black students, but he was not yet noticeably conservative. Indeed, his dissertation, "Essays in the Theory of the Distribution of Income," contained a technical defense of affirmative action—although he never used the phrase—as the only way to redress long-standing economic inequality. But it was also at M.I.T. that Loury came to embrace the idea of meritocracy with near-religious fervor. "I knew that the Jewish and Wasp kids from Yale and Princeton sitting at the front of the class asking the hard questions were where the real action was, and that was where I wanted to be," he says.

In 1979, after receiving his Ph.D. from M.I.T., Loury began teaching at the University of Michigan. That year, he received a playful compliment from a white colleague: "You really *are* good, Glenn. We would have hired you even if you were Jewish!" Loury was euphoric. "I liked that," he said. "It was exactly how I wanted it: Don't do me any favors. Discriminate against me if you like"—he pauses—"and I'll *still* kick your ass!"

While Loury was at Michigan, his politics edged further to the right, but the shift was inspired by labor politics rather than by racial politics. It was the late seventies, and the recession was having a severely detrimental impact on the state—an impact that was exacerbated by what Loury saw as unreasonable union demands. At a university known as a hotbed of pro-labor activism, neither these anti-union views nor his arguments for deregulation were looked upon kindly. In 1981, after presenting a paper to the N.A.A.C.P. in which he advocated letting gas prices be determined by free-market forces, he was called "the black David Stockman." That was the first time—but hardly the last—that Loury provoked the enmity of the civil-rights establishment.

In his political exodus, Loury was inspired by the civil-rights leader Bayard Rustin's 1965 *Commentary* essay "From Protest to Politics," which argues that economic hardship had become a bigger problem for blacks than segregation. Loury explains, "Rustin said, 'Look, this

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isn't a racial problem, it's an economic problem. We have to figure out how working people can raise their standard of living and survive automation and urban decay. That requires politics, not protest.' African-Americans are largely working class, and, as an economist, I knew that working-class folk were going to be catching hell for quite some time. We had to help them. *That's* the problem we have to confront, not white racism."

Loury was soon recruited by Harvard, which was looking for a distinguished black social scientist to give its foundering Afro-American Studies program a boost. Despite his relative inexperience—Loury had finished his doctorate barely five years before—he was offered a joint appointment with the Economics Department. In 1982, he arrived in Cambridge a tenured full professor. After years spent railing against affirmative action, Loury was now in the awkward situation of having clearly been hired as a result of its principles. For the first time in his life, he says, he was plagued by self-doubt. He had long, soul-searching conversations with the head of the Afro-American Studies department, Nathan Huggins, in which Huggins repeatedly reassured Loury that he was in fact qualified. "Just look around you," Huggins said. "Not every professor here is a genius—some haven't published a book in ten years. Do *they* feel bad because merit wasn't the only reason they were hired?" Loury wasn't convinced. "I didn't know if I had anything more to say," he recalls. "I thought that I had run dry. It was only a matter of time before everyone saw what a fake I was."



Sensing little support from the Economics Department, Loury spent most of his time in Afro-American Studies and began writing more about race. Two years later, he abandoned both departments entirely and accepted an offer to teach political economy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government—a move that relieved the intense pressure he felt to prove himself in economics. "I choked," he says. "I was just too terrified that I would fail to make the grade in economics. Moving to the Kennedy School was a good cover story for my little crisis."

Previously, Loury had always analyzed race through a prism of complex economic jargon. Now his essays began to appear in general-interest magazines like *The New Republic* and *Commentary*, and he suddenly had access to a much wider audience. He remembers the pride he felt one day in a Cambridge bookstore when he saw someone pick up a magazine and exclaim, "Wow! Glenn Loury has something in here!"

Many people, however, were not pleased with the things Loury was saying. One day, Loury recalls, he received an angry call from Benjamin Hooks, the executive director of the N.A.A.C.P., who had a copy of an unpublished essay of Loury's in which Loury criticized the organization for failing to address the plight of the (usually black) victims of crime. Hooks wanted the offending passage toned down. "Hooks told me, 'Look, I know these problems exist, but as a civil-rights leader my job is to hold white people's feet to the fire. How can I go around criticizing little black kids?' " Loury refused to make any changes.

In late 1984, Loury was invited to speak at a National Urban Coalition meeting. The audience included Carl Holman, the Coalition's president; Walter Fauntroy, then the District of Columbia's delegate to Congress; Coretta Scott King, Martin Luther King's widow; and other civil-rights leaders. Loury gave what had become his standard spiel ("The real problem is the black poor. You've exhausted your moral capital with your whining. Legislative solutions won't do any good. In short, the civil-rights movement is over"), only to be met with silence. "They were more hurt than angry," Loury says. "Holman told me, 'We appreciate your ideas, but you have to be more careful about who it is you say these things to.' " As the meeting drew to a close, Loury says, Coretta Scott King was crying quietly.

Fame was a heady experience for Loury. As the country grappled with stubborn social problems in the aftermath of the civil-rights movement and the War on Poverty, his message of self-help was in great demand, and his opinions were sought in lecture halls and boardrooms across the country. He was frequently invited to Washington, and there became a friend of Clarence Thomas's: he and Thomas would discuss conservative philosophy and compare their experiences as embattled black conservatives. (When Anita Hill's sexual-harassment allegations against Thomas became public, Loury offered his friend prayers and support. "Even if what Anita Hill said was true—and I don't believe it was—what the Senate put Clarence through was outrageous," Loury says. "It was wrong that he was used as an occasion to fight over the legacy of Reagan and civil rights. I hated seeing him have to suffer through all that.") In addition to the support that Loury received from the growing ranks of black conservatives, he found himself allied with the white neoconservative thinkers, whose stock had been rising precipitously under Reagan. When Loury withdrew his name from consideration for the Department of Education position in 1987 and news of his infidelity and drug use came out, his fellow-neoconservatives were more surprised than horrified. "It was so strange that I think people decided that there was no point trying to understand it," William Kristol recalls. "He had these inner demons and we all hoped he would conquer them." Despite the revelation that Loury had essentially been leading a double life, his position among the neoconservatives didn't seem to be in jeopardy. A member in good standing of the editorial board of Irving Kristol's *Public Interest*, Loury began attending exclusive sessions where conservatives developed strategies to preserve the gains of the Reagan revolution.

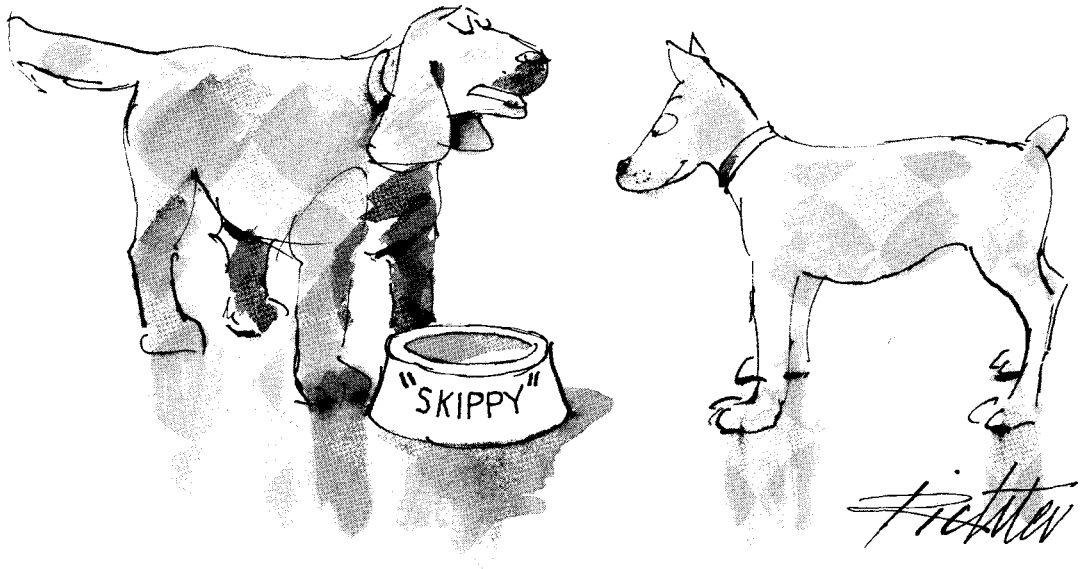
Loury remembers one such meeting well—a gathering hosted by William F. Buckley and Richard Neuhaus at the Union League Club in New York. Irving Kristol, Podhoretz, Midge Decter, and others were discussing the 1988 Presidential campaign. At one point, the *National Review's* publisher, William Rusher, denounced Jack Kemp for suggesting "enterprise zones" to help rehabilitate inner cities. Conservatives shouldn't try to out-Democrat the Democrats, Rusher argued, for there were simply no Republican votes in the black community to be won.

As the only African-American in the room, Loury felt a responsibility to speak. "I said, 'Hey, these ghettos are not someplace way out on the moon.

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They're right here, and, much as we conservatives agree that government can't fix them all, we must at least talk about what we *can* do. We can't just write them off. If Kemp's ideas are bad, then we need to find better ones.' "

Never perfect, the fit between Loury and the neoconservatives was becoming increasingly strained. Few sensed Loury's growing ambivalence. The conservative thinker Charles Murray was one who did. "I always knew something odd was going on with Glenn," he recalls. "I wanted to say, 'Hey, come out of the closet.' He's uneasy about being tagged a conservative, but his world view is hardly that of a social democrat. I know what he's against, but I've never known what he's for."



"I insisted on the quotation marks."

• •

One day in 1988, while Loury was in New York for a *Public Interest* board meeting, he had a revelation. Touring the Metropolitan Museum with Lisa Schiffren (who later wrote Dan Quayle's "Murphy Brown" speech), he lamented the fact that, despite his prominence, he was completely isolated from his colleagues—that, in short, he had no friends. "But, Glenn, *we're* your friends," she reassured him. "You're a member of a historically liberal ethnic minority, who through your own intellectual evolution have come to dissent from its convictions pretty much down the line. You voted for Reagan, you're pro-life, for family values—you're one of us."

"That really shook me up, because she seemed so right," Loury says. "I just didn't *feel* like one of them. And I'll never be one of them, no matter what they think. What am I supposed to do? Become Jewish? That conversation was a wake-up call. It underscored just *how* isolated I was."

In a presentation that Loury made at the ex-radical David Horowitz's 1990 "Second Thoughts on Race" conference, he departed from his prepared speech. "My racial identity is useful to you," he said, reminding the audience that his relation to the white right was one of mutual exploitation. "My breaking ranks confirms you in your own apostasy. It helps you to see your deviation from the 'progressive' ranks as valid and nonracist because here I am, a prominent black, agreeing with you. If by some magic I were suddenly to become white, my brilliant, perceptive, and courageous insights would just as suddenly be reduced to pedestrian, commonplace complaints, of little political or personal comfort to you." Loury's own second thoughts were getting the better of him; he called for white conservatives to fight their own battles. "I'm tired of doing y'all's work," he concluded.

Perhaps no event has better highlighted Loury's isolation in recent years than the publication, last November, of Charles Murray's and Richard J. Herrnstein's best-selling book "The Bell Curve," which argues that blacks are genetically predisposed toward lower I.Q.s—and lesser achievement—than whites. Although Loury considered Murray a friend, he was disturbed by the book's findings and, as a mathematical economist, extremely skeptical about its use of statistics. "Low I.Q. may be a problem in our society, but it doesn't have much to do with race," Loury says.

Earlier this year, after testifying before Congress about welfare reform, Loury ran into Murray at a luncheon held by William Bennett at his think tank, Empower America. It was the first time Loury and Murray had seen each other since the book appeared. "I said, 'Charles, I've written some things about the book and I'm going to write some more, but I want things to be on the up-and-up between us.' "

As Loury specified a few of his misgivings, Murray grew angry and cut him off. "Glenn, if I were in your shoes and couldn't write anything positive about the book, then I just wouldn't write anything at all," he said.

Loury says he was amazed by his friend's patronizing attitude; for one thing, what would it really mean for Murray to be in Loury's shoes? After a few more minutes, Murray abruptly ended the conversation, turned his back on Loury, and headed into the elevator, accompanied by the political scientist James Q. Wilson. As the doors closed, Loury says, he could make out only a few words of their conversation: the two social scientists were talking about wine.

Loury had further problems when he sought a home for a proposed critical essay on "The Bell Curve." The editors of *Commentary*, a magazine that had happily opened its pages to him in the past, informed him that they weren't interested in a piece: they had reviewed the book once, and they were planning to run Murray's own reply to his critics. Feeling let down by his neoconservative allies, Loury wrote a letter to the editor, Neal Kozodoy. "Someone once re-

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marked to me, concerning magazines, that writers mistakenly see our relationships with the editors who publish us as ones of friendship, when in fact they are always, and only, business relationships," he wrote. "In our case, I had perhaps naïvely thought the matter to involve a bit of both. . . . You must know that your decision in this matter will affect my assessment of the real basis of our relationship. I can only conclude that, having done your sums, you are acting so as to further what you take to be your more fundamental interests."

Loury's sense of betrayal surfaced during a conference at Harvard to celebrate *Commentary's* fiftieth anniversary, this February. In a speech, Podhoretz announced that the last difference separating conservatives and neoconservatives—the latter's attachment to the welfare state—had disappeared. So disturbed was Loury by these remarks that early the next morning he went to his office to amend the paper he was to give later that day. "Many neoconservatives marched for racial justice thirty years ago," he read. "Then the demons were clear. They are less so now. But you cannot tell me that what now transpires in ghetto America does not constitute a great injustice to those tens of thousands of youngsters who never get a chance. Is there no longer room within the intellectual edifice of neoconservatism for moral outrage in the face of such injustice?"

Before he could even descend from the dais, Loury was cornered by Podhoretz and Decter. If Loury was so contemptuous of their efforts, what would *he* do to solve the problems of the underclass?

Loury confessed that he had no answers but was startled by what he saw as their stark logic: when no solution is found, simply abandon the problem.

"It felt as if they expected me to be a self-hating black in order to be a neoconservative. I can be dismayed, or even disgusted, at what black people do, but I *can't* view my own people with contempt—can't they understand that?"

Later that day, Loury confronted Podhoretz: "Norman, you say there are no more neoconservatives, because no conservatives believe that the welfare state is worth salvaging. But *I* still believe in the welfare state, so what does that make me?"

"Well, Glenn," Podhoretz replied, "you may be the last neoconservative in America."

AT DUSK

Walking through the woods
I saw these things:
a cat, lying, looking at me;
a red hut I could not enter;
the white grin of the snared fox;
the spider in a milk bottle,
cradling the swaddled fly,
rocking it to sleep;
a set of car keys, hanging from a tree;
a fire, still warm, and a bone
the length of my arm, my name
carved on it, mis-spelt.
The dog left me there,
and I went on myself.

—ROBIN ROBERTSON

SIX miles south of downtown Boston, the affluent suburb of Milton is home to white-collar businessmen who commute to the city. Here Loury lives in a large New England-style house. This evening, sitting in his living room, he focusses on the events of the past few years. He speaks of what he calls "my troubles" more fully than he has before, his tone growing sombre as he settles back into an overstuffed white couch. It is as if he were reading from his moral rap sheet. "In 1985, when I was at the Institute for Advanced Study, in Princeton, I'd go to the worst parts of Trenton to buy drugs, pick up women, and hang out in bars," he says softly. "At conferences in Washington or New York, I'd sneak out after the meetings and dinner and stay out all night doing various sordid things." He explains why he was trying to throw his twenty-three-year-old girlfriend out of the Boston apartment: he wanted to install a new lover, who was a heavy coke user.

After he withdrew from the Education Department appointment, Loury began freebasing several times a day. When the judge dropped the drug-possession charges in exchange for Loury's entering a rehabilitation program, he began using more, even getting high while travelling to and from therapy. Once, after he'd given Linda numerous assurances that he had stopped, she caught him freebasing in the garage. When he returned to the house, she was on the floor pounding her fists and weeping. "I didn't really care," he says. "I said I was sorry, or something, but I didn't really care."

Similar scenes followed until one day, in February, 1988, Loury barricaded himself in a spare bedroom with an ample supply of cocaine and X-rated movies. For twenty-four hours, he did nothing but get high and watch pornography. The next day, he surveyed his life—a distraught wife, a debilitating drug habit, problems with the law, an uncertain professional future—and realized that things had spun out of control.

Loury agreed to spend a month at McLean Hospital, in the Boston suburb of Belmont, followed by a few weeks in a halfway house. A breakthrough came one evening while Loury was telling two white counsellors about all the enemies he had made by being black and conservative. "Then why are you giving them what they want?" he remembers the counsellors asking, deliberately provoking him. "Why are you showing your ass and acting like such a nigger?"

"I was *outraged* at their presumption," Loury says. "I knew that in their own way they were trying to help me.

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But what did *they* know about being black? They were just projecting their own racist stereotype about black people onto me." He still fumes at the memory. "But I eventually realized that, the way I had been acting, I had been doing pretty much the same thing."

At McLean, Loury was visited by a pastor who prayed and read the Twenty-third Psalm with him. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me": the words were familiar from childhood, but now he heard them differently. "For the first time in my life, I felt that I wasn't alone and that God could help," he says. That spring, he attended Easter services. As the organ swelled and the pastor preached, he thought of his sins and wept.

Linda gave birth to a son, Glenn, Jr., soon after Loury was released. They had tried for years to have children, and the symbolism weighed heavily: for them, it seemed nothing less than a miracle. Three years later, a second son was born, and they named him Nehemiah, after the Old Testament sage.

As if on cue, three-year-old Nehemiah Loury scampers across the living room, tripping on his powder-blue pajama jumpsuit, and slams his dark, downy curls into his father's large stomach. Gently cradling his son, Loury tells the Biblical story of Nehemiah, a story that he believes has a great deal of relevance for African-Americans today.

Nehemiah, an adviser to the Persian king, learns that the Jews of Jerusalem have let their city fall into disrepair. Its walls have crumbled, the gates have burned, its people are unfaithful. This saddens him, and he asks to be appointed governor of Judah so that he can rebuild the city. "When Nehemiah gets to Jerusalem, there's a lot of resistance from all the corrupt, lazy people who don't want change," Loury says, in lecturing mode. "So Nehemiah asks the king for help. He can't rebuild Jerusalem by himself. He needs men, timber, mortar. But he also knows that nobody can do it for him. The Jews must rebuild the city themselves.

"What does it really *mean* for a city not to have walls?" he asks. "It's a powerful metaphor, and closely related to black people's situation today. A city without walls has no integrity, or structure; it is subject to the vagaries of any fad or fancy. Without walls, you are lost, as opposed to having some kind of internally derived sense of who you are to help you decide what you will and won't do."

Somehow, the gospel of self-help sounds more inspirational when it is told through Biblical stories of prophecy and redemption. Loury's exegesis is impressive, laden with metaphor and symbolism; he has obviously studied the story deeply and has thought about its meaning for some time. Yet there is something pat about the way he recounts Nehemiah's—and his own—story of redemption.

When I return home, I find a Bible and read about Nehemiah for myself. The great leader, the benevolent king, the ailing city—all there, just as Loury said. But as I read further I learn that Nehemiah did more than simply rebuild Jerusalem's walls. He also introduced far-reaching social and economic reforms that transformed the society itself, foremost among them being the abolition of slavery.

It seems that if you owed a debt in ancient Judah you might lose your land—and even be forced into servitude—if it wasn't repaid. When Nehemiah arrived, he urged the Jews to forgive one another's debts and free those they had enslaved. I am particularly struck by the fact that he encouraged them by example: cancelling all the debts owed him, he asked others to follow his lead. Nehemiah freed the Jews by first freeing himself; their bondage ended because his did, too.

As I continue through the Bible, reading of the miracles performed by wise prophets and faithful men, my mind keeps coming back to the many hours I have spent with Loury. Like him, I'm not quite sure how his story will end. Now that Loury has concluded his self-imposed tutelage—kicking drugs and finding God—I wonder whether he has truly emancipated himself or merely rebuilt the walls that keep him in. ♦

THE LEGAL MIND AT WORK

"Judges lie, then lawyers lie, then clients lie."—*Alan M. Dershowitz, in U.S. News & World Report, October 25, 1993.*

"Lawyers don't lie."—*Alan M. Dershowitz, in an interview with Casper Citron, on WOR Radio, New York, December 10, 1994.*

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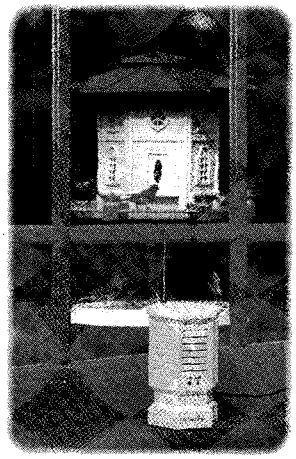
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POPULAR CHRONICLES

SHORT CUTS

The hairdresser as confidant is a well-known phenomenon, but New York's Robert Stuart has made his salon a salon where everyone joins the debate.

BY SUSAN ORLEAN

ROBERT STUART ran away from home when he was a teen-ager, used to be macrobiotic, worries that Republican welfare reform might lead to urban violence, thinks Hugh Grant is good-looking but not amazing-looking, is a Nietzschean, has been faithful to his wife since they met seventeen years ago, and planned to become a social worker but ended up as a hairdresser.

Robert, who is forty-three years old, has been in business on Amsterdam Avenue for fourteen years. For the first ten years, he was in a bigger space, a few blocks south. He moved into his current storefront four years ago. It was previously occupied by Mario the shoemaker, who now has a place up the block. I happen to patronize Mario, too, but our conversations rarely advance past the subject



ROBERT RISKO

I know all these things because Robert mentioned them the last time he trimmed my hair. Most of what I've told Robert about myself I don't remember, but it ran deep. Robert cuts hair at his own shop, the Robert Stuart Salon, on Amsterdam Avenue at Eighty-fourth Street, in a skinny storefront about the size of a subway car, with strawberry-blond walls and five wide black barber chairs. The place has a pearly sleekness, but it's cozy. If you are sitting on the banquette near the door and you speak emphatically, someone having a hair wash in the back can answer you: everything in the place is within earshot.

of rubber soles. This is not a reflection on Mario, who is affable enough—although he's never run his fingers through my hair—as much as a reflection on my relationship with Robert and the kind of place he runs. It is a sort of salon of salons, an ongoing symposium involving Robert, his assistants, his clients, and whoever else walks in the door. The majority of Robert's customers are professional people who live in the neighborhood or work nearby—somewhere between Lincoln Center and Columbia University. Many of his regulars are actors, dancers, writers, casting directors, art dealers, or youngish lawyers—people

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who appreciate stylish haircuts but need to look as if they could hold a job. Many of them are big talkers and don't need much head-massaging to open up to Robert or, as often happens, to one another. Robert himself may be the biggest talker of all. He turns out to be a perfect master of ceremonies, in a compact, ideally proportioned forum, in a neighborhood of chatterboxes, at a moment when the success of confessional television shows and call-in radio programs suggests that people are especially curious about each other and are full of their own opinions and raring to talk. Every time I've been in the salon, I have stepped knee deep into a conversational current that moves swiftly from, say, spiritualism to cream rinse to Oedipal struggle. Between the gushing of his customers, the roaring of the blow-dryers, the trilling of the telephone, and Robert's own conversational flow, the salon is a river of constant noise.

ROBERT thinks women are great. Most of his clients are women, although he does cut hair for a lot of men. Whenever men are in the salon, they are expected to act like women—that is, to speak frankly and openly about personal, intellectual, and political matters and, at the same time, make informed decisions about their hair. One day not long ago, Robert was saying that he felt that his cognitive identity was at least as much female as male, which meant, essentially, that he was paying himself a compliment. There were half a dozen people in the salon at the time, including his wife, Valerie, who was working that day as the receptionist. (Robert's regular receptionists are Nancy Bender, a singer who is sometimes hired to perform as a life-size Barbie doll at parties; Roberta Willison, an actress who was in London just then studying with the Royal Shakespeare Company; and Miguel Garcia, a former Eastern Airlines flight attendant who is between jobs.) Robert then said that he'd noticed that in his group-therapy sessions—he has been in every kind of therapy but likes group the most—the women were much more able to open up than the men, and that he considered his sentimental nature and his enthusiasm for conversation to be fundamental feminine traits. He happened to be cutting a guy's hair at the time, and he paused, with one hand steadying the guy's head forward so he could trim the fringe along his neck; his other arm was outstretched, and the needle-nosed silver scissors he held were glinting in the light. A few minutes earlier, Robert had been moderating a discussion of violence in film—he's against it—and saying how proud he was that his fifteen-year-old son hadn't liked "Pulp Fiction." "Jeremiah and I walked out of 'Pulp Fiction,' " he'd said. "We went to see 'Little Women' instead. I loved it. I cried."

Guy in the chair: "Really? I thought 'Pulp Fiction' was great. Of course, I grew up watching violence on television."

Robert: "See, I have a hard time with that. Don't you think we're becoming a society that is getting too used to violence? And humor with violence—that really scares me. I don't want to go too, too short in the back today. On the other hand, if it's short on top and too bushy in back, it gets sort of Brooklynish—you know what I'm saying?"

Guy: "Definitely. The Pentagon did a study of bombardiers in the Gulf War—"

Woman in the next chair, having highlights done, her head bristling with tinfoil leaves full of hair dye: "I heard about that study and—well, I'm a television producer, and it makes me really think about my profession and its role in where society is going."

Robert: "You know, since you're in such a powerful industry, in television, you really affect people's lives. I envy that. Making an impact, that's what it's about, isn't it? Sit still—I'm going to go over your sideburns now."

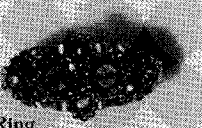
ROBERT is short, wiry, and jaunty. He has bright brown eyes, olive skin, and thick, glossy, highly manageable dark hair, which he wears loose and longish, so it hangs over his ears. Ninety-nine per cent of the time that Robert and I have spent together, I've been dressed in one of the shop's black floppy robes. A hundred per cent of the time, he's been wearing a pair of cotton-twill pants and a rayon camp shirt—usually vintage, and usually the kind that Ricky Ricardo wore around the house on "I Love Lucy." He owns one suit. I know this because one day the subject came up while he was cutting the curly blond hair of a woman who teaches law and researches feminist legal theory at Columbia.

Robert: "So, you just got married,

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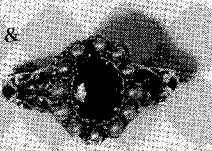
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right? Tell me about it. How was the wedding? How was your family? Were they supportive? It's so interesting to me that you had a real seriously traditional wedding. Do you think tradition is coming back?"

Law professor: "You know, I really wonder. I never thought I'd want that kind of wedding, but it really mattered. I thought I'd feel funny, but I didn't. It was great."

Robert: "I love ceremonies. When our kids were born, we had everything—a bris, a baptism, everything. After I'm done today, I'm going to a bar mitzvah. I brought my one suit. It's like a joke in my family: Oh, here's Robert and here's Robert's one suit."

Everything Robert says, he says with overwhelming earnestness. In his presence, you feel that everything is important and everything is at stake—the direction of society, the length of your bangs, the quest for self-awareness. He is a stirring storyteller. His accent is memorable; it involves relocating "r"s whenever possible, in the old-fashioned New York way. He now lives in Tenafly, New Jersey, but he is a native of the neighborhood. He grew up twenty blocks north of the salon; his father owned a jewelry store on the Lower East Side.

Robert has a handsome, sturdy aspect, but he is also quite excitable. One day, several of us in the shop were talking about anxiety—someone getting highlights done started the discourse by saying she'd lately become insomniac—and Robert mentioned that he'd twice gone to the emergency room in a panic because he thought he was having a heart attack. The first time was when he had a steak after years of being macrobiotic; the heart attack turned out to be gas pains. The second time was before travelling overseas to meet his mother-in-law. Valerie is Filipino, and Robert figured her mother might have never before met anyone Jewish, and then he began obsessing over the possibility that while he was in the Philippines he would be kidnapped by zealous Christians who would try to convert him. This heart attack turned out to be pure anxiety. Robert has a restless mind and what used to be called a vivid imagination. He also happens to be dyslexic, and recently he was found to have attention-deficit disorder. For several weeks after that diagnosis, A.D.D. was the big topic in the salon, and many of his clients became convinced that they might be suffering from it, too. One day, I walked in while he was finishing cutting the hair of a country-and-Western singer, who was describing how she, too, had trouble concentrating. Robert was snipping the last pieces around her ear. "I don't know," she was saying. "I just can't get focussed. My mind goes back and forth."

"Exactly," Robert said. "I read the same page in a book over and over again."

Just then, the woman caught a glimpse in the mirror of the tableau that included Robert, his sharp scissors, and her temples. "You, um, *can* concentrate, can't you?" she said, suddenly rigid. "I mean, you're holding blades against people's heads all day."

"Me?" Robert asked. "Oh, not really. I can barely concentrate at *all*."



"Murray Mitchell—I represent the deceased."

ONE recent Saturday, I sat in the salon, got my hair washed, and then sat in the salon for the rest of the day.

Alice Burress, a television-commercial director: "I'm having a one-step and a cut."

Robert: "A single-process, you mean."

Alice: "That's what I mean. A single." To Roberta Willison, the receptionist: "Did you know that my mom comes up every six weeks from North Carolina to have Robert cut her hair? And now she brings all her friends. Robert got them all to get out of those old Southern boofy-dos. Now Robert's got me in one of those 'Beverly Hills 90210' shaggy cuts."

Robert: "I think of it more as Jane Fonda in 'Klute,' sort of shaggy-messy. So how are you, Alice? How's life?"

Alice: "I'm good. I'm bidding on a Kellogg's commercial in Milan, so I was going to ask you about Italian people, since I know you were in Italy on vacation. I'll be directing people in Italian, but I don't speak Italian. It's an American product, so they want an American director, because they think of Americans as more humanistic."

Robert: "Do you want to do features?"

Alice, sighing: "Well, I want to, but I think to do features you need a lot of life experience."

Robert: "Don't cross your legs. It makes it uneven. Don't you think you have life experience?"

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Alice: "Oh, *no*—not really. I mean, I've been in school my whole life. I haven't really been out there."

Robert: "It's really amazing to me that you can say that. It shows real strength that you can see that in yourself. You're so open. That's probably why you're good."

Alice: "I think I get some of my jobs because they want a woman."

Robert: "Maybe it's the sensitivity that women have that they're looking for."

Roberta: "Or maybe that a woman wouldn't make as strong a statement. Maybe it's not such a compliment."

Richard Scott, one of the hair colorists: "Roberta, I was just thinking, with your looks and your manner, you're a walking Merchant-Ivory film."

Molly Haskell, the film critic and writer, who is waiting for her appointment: "You know, I showed some thirties screwball comedies to my class at Columbia this semester, and they really showed how much power the women of that era had—for example, the power of knowing they could say no. Now women are just expected to be sexually available, and, instead of it giving them more power, it gives them less."

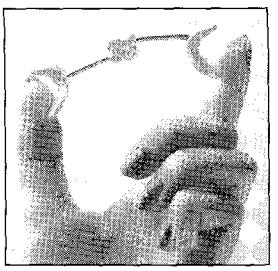
Joanna Wolper, a television producer, who has just walked in: "Are you Molly? You were my first guest on my television show!"

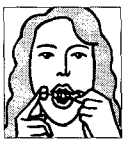
Robert is now done with Alice and is cutting the hair of a ninth-grade girl named Anna Gay, who has also decided to get a Jane Fonda-in-"Klute" hairdo. Anna is watching herself in the mirror and appears paralyzed. Her mother, sitting on the banquette near the door, keeps telling her that she looks great. Robert finishes and says to her that she looks great. She looks as if she were about to cry. "You're going to hate me for a day," he says to her. "But then you'll be O.K., because *everyone* will tell you how great you look. You are going to hate me, but I can take it."

Molly: "Doesn't it kill you to see a girl getting her hair cut? It's such a powerful memory, your haircuts when you were a kid. And the reaction of your mother. My mother is always telling me how she liked my hair better 'before,' and the 'before' is always some imaginary time that never was."

Robert: "My father had to drag me to the barber, kicking and screaming. Of course, with my family, every-

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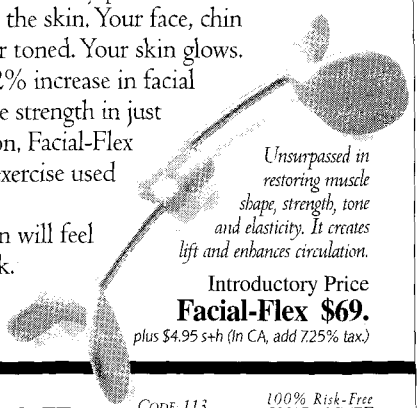




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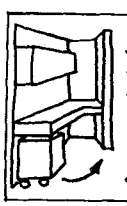
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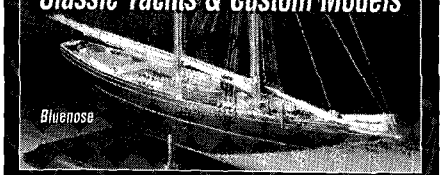


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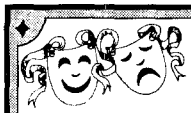
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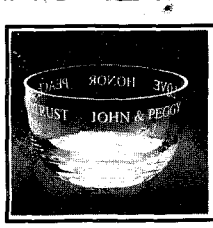
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thing I did I did kicking and screaming."

In comes a pock-faced man selling packages of aerosol pepper spray, which he offers to Robert and Richard, saying, "Gentlemen, perhaps you'd like one as a gift to your wives or girlfriends?" Robert shakes his head, and the man shrugs and leaves. The door opens again, and Mimi Turque, who plays the mother in the Broadway production of "Kiss of the Spider Woman," enters. She is here to tell Robert that her recent haircut was a success. "My husband fell over!" she exclaims. "The hair stylist for the show fell over! Everyone fell over!"

Robert says, "Oh, oh, oh, oh, I'm just so happy for you," and waves goodbye to her with his blow-dryer.

The salon fills, empties, and fills again. Over the next few hours, the conversation wanders: the feminist art historian Linda Nochlin tells a story—about how she had her hair dyed when she was in Italy and it all broke off and she had to buy a wig—to Tanya Anticevic, an actress and a preschool teacher at Blessed Sacrament, who has just tried dyeing her own hair, which turned green, forcing her to wear a hat to school for a week until today, when she had time to come in and have it dyed back to her own color, which is especially important because she is about to audition for some movie agents; and in the next chair Ruth Kramer, a journalist who is leaving for London tonight to begin a book tour, is getting her hair blow-dried and is half-listening to Linda and half-listening to Robert, who is telling her how smart she is to keep her hair gray, but then he is interrupted by Denise Bethel, an auctioneer at Sotheby's, who has just stopped by to show him an Atget photograph—he loves Atget—and is about to leave when Linda, overhearing her, begins debating with her whether Atget would qualify as "rare" or just "subtle"; and while they are talking John Winer, a real-estate investment banker, shows up for his appointment, and he and Robert begin a conversation about the psychological implications of being touched by service professionals—that is, dentists, hairdressers, manicurists—and John tries to convince Robert that he should get a massage, even though Robert thinks if he had one he might throw up, because he thinks he holds too much inside emotionally; and then Annette Kletter, Robert's banker, comes in—she doesn't have an appointment but she has just found out that her father has died—and after Robert hugs her and commiserates with her she says to him that she thinks that having her hair washed and cut will make it possible for her to face the rest of the day. After she leaves, Mary Ellen Burns, a division chief at the Federal Communications Commission, comes in, and while she's getting trimmed she tries to reassure Robert—he has told her how much he's worried by the conservative juggernaut—that she is certain that Clinton will be reëlected, a comment that turns the discourse toward politics and money and class and real estate, which reminds Margaret Tracey, a principal dancer with New York City Ballet, who is trying highlights for the first time, of a ballet fund-raiser she has just attended, which was held in a palatial apartment that used to belong to Marjorie Merriweather Post; and her anecdote leads to a debate about funding for the arts, about whether Bert on "Sesame Street" is going to have AIDS, about why the audience for opera is so old, and about how Dirt Devils are so much better than Dustbusters—this comes up because Margaret's fiancé, Russell Kaiser, who is also with City Ballet, has come in to tell her that he's finished vacuuming the van they've borrowed—and then we talk about where to buy a Dirt Devil, about getting married, and about wedding anniversaries, and someone mentions how, coincidentally, her mother gave her money to buy a Dirt Devil as a tenth-anniversary present; and then somewhere in the middle of this the last customer of the day arrives, an old friend of Robert's named Vincent Liff, who is the casting director of "Les Misérables" and "Kiss of the Spider Woman" and a dozen other Broadway shows, and, after they talk about Vincent's newest project—to find a kid to star in a musical based on the movie "Big"—and about how the neighborhood has changed over the last twenty years and about losing hair and growing up and growing old, Vincent reminds Robert he really should go see "Les Miz" again, because right now there's a particularly affecting Jean Valjean.

An enduring topic in a hair salon, naturally, is how people look. In such conversations, Robert is a master of the thumbnail sketch. The first time he

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cut my hair, he asked me what we would be doing. I said I wanted it long but not unruly. He agreed, and then said, "On the other hand, you don't want it to be too Upper West Side social worker with two kids and a co-op, either. You don't want Barbra Streisand in 'The Prince of Tides.' " One Saturday, there were about six people in the salon, and we all began talking about how shocking it is the first time you get bangs, and someone reminded Robert of the time a performance artist came in for her haircut carrying a little casket, and put the locks of her cut-off hair in it. Most people would rather not make their haircuts into quite such a performance. The other day, a woman named Rene Foss, who is a flight attendant on Northwest Airlines and is also half of a comedy team, was telling everyone about how one time at Robert's she'd run into an ex-boyfriend. "Talk about a vulnerable moment," she said. "You're sitting here in this little robe, with your hair dripping wet, and you look awful, and then in walks some guy you'd been seeing."



"What did you do?" someone asked her.

"I tried to tuck my head into the robe," Rene said. "I thought since everyone looks so generic with wet hair and a black robe that maybe he wouldn't notice, and he'd just go away."

"Was that the guy who was driving you crazy?" Miguel, the receptionist who was on duty that day, asked. "The one you said you were trying to avoid?"

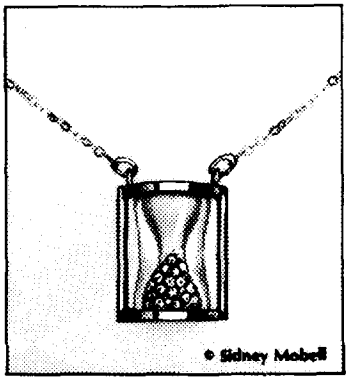
"Well, yes, it was," Rene said. "Actually, I had decided I never wanted to see him again for the rest of my life. I did everything possible to avoid him, and I still managed to run into him everywhere I went. I started to think he was stalking me."

"And he's a client of mine?" Robert said, with emotion. "I cut the hair of someone who was stalking you?"

"Not really *stalking*," Rene said. "I just thought it was weird that I couldn't get him out of my life."

The conversation lingered on the question of how to avoid people you've broken up with, and then someone mentioned how irritating it is to still want to look good when you run into the person you've broken up with, and especially how irritating it is if you don't look good but your ex does, and then we talked for a while about those perennial women-getting-their-hair-done topics—love, heartbreak, and romance—and then we made our way to the subject of antioxidant vitamins (Rene was on her way to her homeopath, who had recommended them to her), and then to the effect that flying has on the human body, which everyone agreed was frightening to contemplate, especially after Rene asked if we'd ever carried a bottle of Evian on a flight and then looked at how crumpled and imploded it had become by the time the plane landed. Robert said he didn't trust technology, and Rene said that she had mixed feelings about it, and that, by the way, her chiropractor had her on a regimen of green tea. Just then, on the banquette, two women were discovering that they were both curators—one for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, where she'd just put together the rap exhibit, and the other for a private art collector, for whom she sought out late-nineteenth-century School of Paris paintings. They kept talking, and it soon emerged that one was from Augusta, Georgia, and the other was about to go *to* Augusta, Georgia, for the Masters tournament. As it happened, they were sitting where, a few days earlier, I had sat listening as two women waiting to get blow-drys had discovered, while wandering through an idle, time-killing conversation, that they were both Dutch. This meant that—here, in the middle of Manhattan, on a rainy late afternoon—they could sit and speak Dutch, and punctuate the conversation with gasps of surprise at that pleasant serendipity. Someone else, eavesdropping, had remarked that she thought Dutch sounded exactly like Yiddish, and what followed was a round of discussion about dying languages, heritage, bringing up children, going to estate sales, and the fact that Jordan is now a very popular girl's name. Several good haircuts were achieved in the meantime. It was one of those occasions when the conversation was really rolling; it felt as if it would have rolled on indefinitely, but then came the last haircut of the afternoon, and the end of the day. ♦

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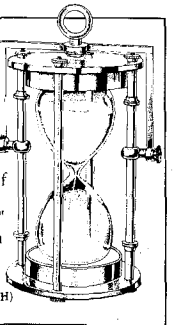
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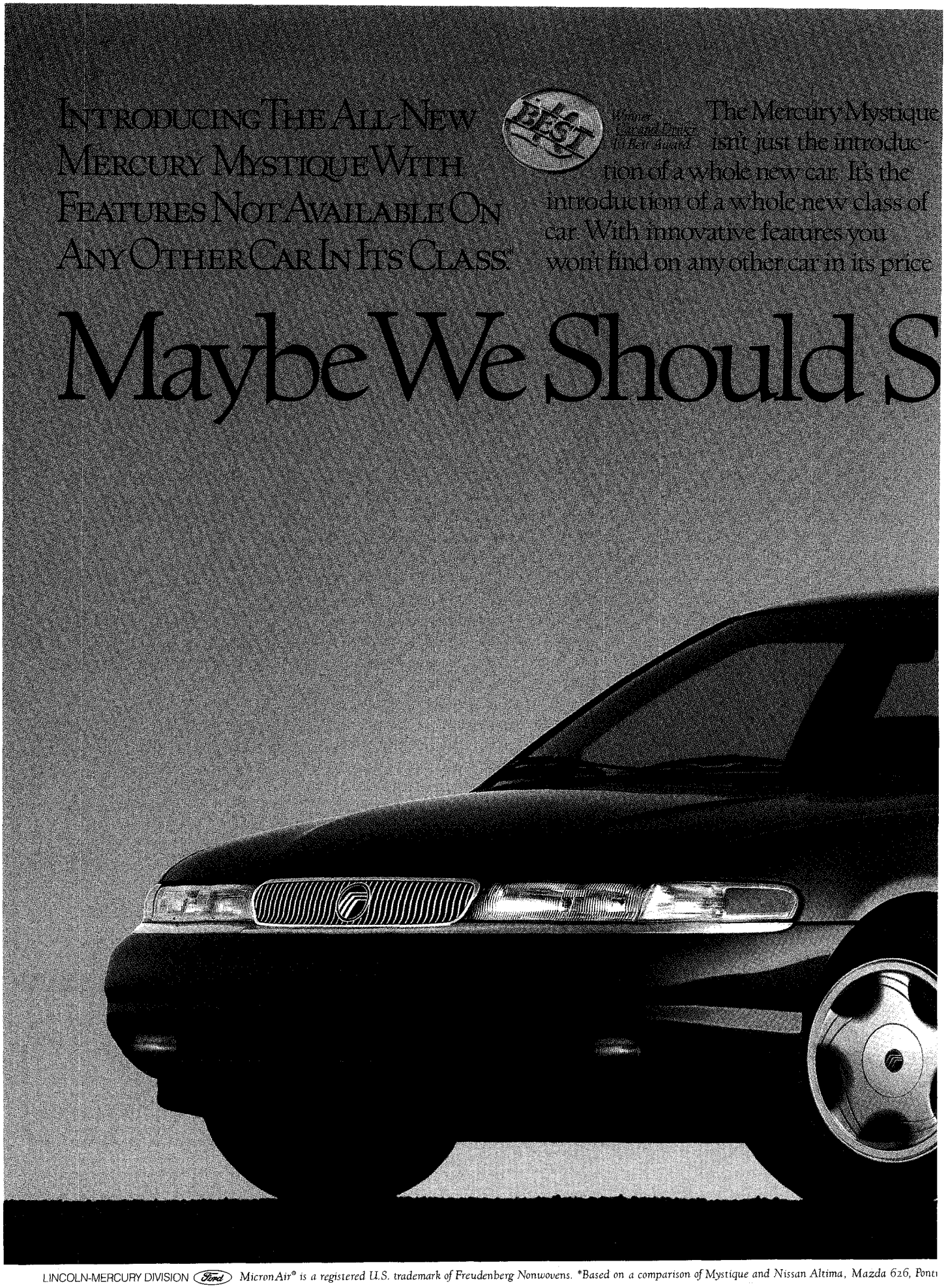


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A REPORTER AT LARGE

EXPLAINING HITLER

What was the genesis of Hitler's evil? In the fifty years since his death, generations of experts have produced wildly competing theories that attempt to account for every aspect of his identity—and imply troubling things about our own.

BY RON ROSENBAUM

In the realm of Hitler explanations, it's come to be called "the survival myth," and, though no one believes it now, it struck a chord in the postwar popular imagination. The image of a Hitler who had escaped—escaped the Berlin bunker, escaped the flames that were said to have consumed him, escaped judgment—turned out to be a perversely seductive one, inspiring fantasists from the lowbrow (the legendary *Police Gazette* "Hitler Is Alive" series) to the highbrow (George Steiner's challenging 1981 parable "The Portage to San Cristóbal of A.H."). These days, as it becomes ever more difficult to imagine that a centenarian Hitler still lives, popular culture has given us *parts* of Hitler escaping; the final sentence of the 1994 best-selling thriller "The Day After Tomorrow," for instance, breathlessly revealed that Hitler's "severed, deep-frozen head" had survived in the hands of neo-Nazis, who wanted to rebuild him from the top down.

Hitler may not have escaped us physically, as the survival myth has it, but in certain important respects he has eluded us. We know where the head is now, or think we do. As the fiftieth anniversary of Hitler's death approached, a sudden flurry of reports in British and German publications debated a new claim that four curved fragments of bone now reposing in a Moscow archive were part of Hitler's skull. But the obsession with the whereabouts of Hitler's remains may be a symptom of a more disturbing truth: regardless of where the skull is, a sure sense of Hitler's mind, of his psyche, has escaped us.

To spend time, as I have for the past several years, with historians, psychologists, psychohistorians, philosophers, and theologians who have devoted themselves to the task of explaining Hitler is to realize how pervasive is the feeling of something still missing, something still inexplicable. "For all the harsh obviousness of his impact on history," Hugh Trevor-Roper (now Lord Dacre), one of the most influential postwar Hitler explainers, maintains, "his character remains elusive." More than elusive, Trevor-Roper elaborated in a conversation with me: "It remains a frightening mystery." Alan Bullock (now Lord Bullock), the Oxford historian and conceptual rival of Trevor-Roper in postwar Hitler-explanatory theory, summed up his frustration after a lifetime of study: "The more I learn about Adolf Hitler," Bullock told me, "the harder I find it to explain."

Is the real survival story, then, Hitler's escape from explanation? Is meaning itself Hitler's final victim? The problem is, first, that the available evidence on key questions is maddeningly incomplete. A half century after Hitler's death, some of the basic facts of his life—from his ancestry (who was his paternal grandfather?) to his last moment (did he die a "soldier's death," by shooting himself with his own gun, or a "coward's death," by biting a cyanide capsule?)—are still the subject of sometimes bitter controversy. Nor can any consensus be found on such fundamental questions as the origin of Hitler's anti-Semitism (and the source of its unique virulence), or the nature of his sexuality and its relation to his political pathology. Missing most of all is a satisfactory sense of Hitler's psychological evolution, his apparent metamorphosis from human being into incarnation of evil. Something that will explain Hitler's baby pictures.

Those baby pictures: they have become a symbolic focus of a fascinating debate not only over the very possibility of attempting to explain Hitler but over the morality of such an attempt. Claude Lanzmann, who directed "Shoah," the nine-and-a-half-hour documentary about the Holocaust, is the most prominent member of a growing faction of intellectuals who believe that any attempt to understand Hitler inevitably degenerates into an exercise in empathy with him. To understand all is to forgive all, and to Lanzmann even the first steps down the slippery slope to understanding are impermissible.

Lanzmann rhetorically flourishes Hitler's baby pictures as icons of his crusade against what he calls "the obscenity of the very project of understanding." There is a famous baby picture, taken when Hitler was about a year old, that shows a round-faced, chubby-cheeked child, a mildly pensive cherub. One could, considering what one knows of his fate, "back-shadow" into his dark eyes and parted lips a melancholy, or even a haunted, expression—the stirrings of some deep disturbance. But one could just as easily see there not incipient demonism but a kind of gentleness.

The point Lanzmann wants to make is that this is Hitler as an innocent—Hitler before he became *Hitler*. "There are some pictures of Hitler as a baby," he has said. But you can't "*engender* the killing, the mass murders, the destruction of six million people" from those pictures. No finite number of explanatory facts—psychological traumas, patterns of bad parenting, political deformations, personal dysfunctions—can add up to the magnitude of the evil that Hitler came to embody and enact. No explanation or concatenation of explanations can bridge the gap, explain the transformation from baby picture to baby killer, to murderer of a million babies. It is not just a gap, Lanzmann argues. It is "an *abyss*."

In surveying the landscape of explanation, Lanzmann echoes a line from Primo Levi's memoir "Survival in Auschwitz": "There is no why here." It is a line—a decree—that was delivered to Levi by an S.S. death-camp guard. A line that has

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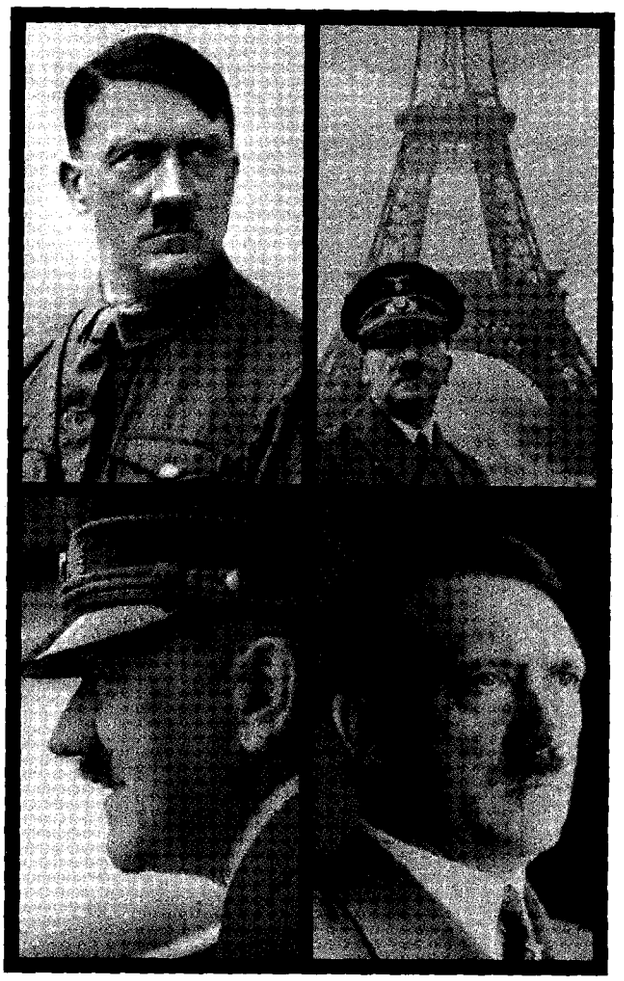
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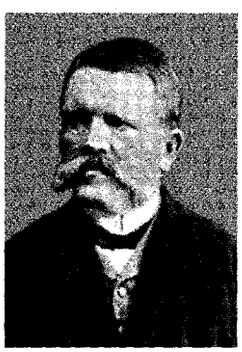
Hitler in 1925. Despite all the analyses, there is a pervasive sense that something is still missing, something fundamentally inexplicable.

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The confounding photograph of the one-year-old Hitler: How to explain the transformation from baby to baby killer?; Klara and Alois Hitler, who have both been blamed for their son's aberration; the Führer as evil rampant.

led another Auschwitz survivor—the psychoanalyst Dr. Louis Micheels—to an impassioned dissent. It is wrong, Dr. Micheels told me, to adopt an S.S. decree in a death camp as the final verdict on our quest to understand Hitler. "There *should* be a why," he insists.

The five decades since Hitler's death have seen a wild profusion of whys, a proliferation of competing Hitlers. Following upon the founding, and clashing, visions offered by Hugh Trevor-Roper and Alan Bullock in Britain—the possessed, demonic, true-believer Hitler versus the cynical, scheming, opportunist Hitler—popular biographies like those of John Toland, in this country, and Joachim Fest, in Germany, have added a wealth of new details from the loosened tongues of the last surviving Hitler contemporaries—details that have tended to deepen the mystery rather than bridge the abyss Lanzmann spoke of. As the tide of fresh facts began to ebb, wave after wave of theory arose. The psychoanalytically oriented school of "psychohistory" plumbed Hitler's murky unconscious for primal scenes and inner Jews. The ideological school plumbed the equally murky depths of his prose and claimed to find in his feverishly logorrheic discourse an intellectual coherence, a serious Weltanschauung that was the true engine of his murderous acts. The last decade has seen the rise of "historicizing" modes of Hitler interpretation, in which Hitler is viewed less as a prime mover than as a product of deep currents in European history—a logical culmination of Western culture rather than an aberration of it.

The multiplicity of theoretical Hitlers is echoed in the multiple Hitlers of popular culture, which range from Chaplin's laughable caricature to drooling psychopaths, from occult satanists to Alec Guinness's more genuinely terrifying "human" Hitler in the 1973 film "Hitler: The Last Ten Days."

What one discovers from an immersion in the postwar Hitler literature and from conversations with leading Hitler interpreters is that Hitler explanations often tell us as much about the explainers as they do about Hitler. That, in a sense, when we talk about Hitler we are talking about who we are—and who we are not. We project upon the inky Rorschach of the evidence an image of our anti-self. Hitler theories are cultural self-portraits in the negative—ways of distancing ourselves from him. And ways of protecting ourselves. Another thing that becomes evident from an odyssey into the realm of Hitler explanations is a deeper need: explanation as consolation; explanation, however meretricious, as a shield against having to face the horror of inexplicability, the inexplicability of horror.

CONSIDER, for instance, a little-known Hitler explanation that emerged in Germany in the nineteen-eighties—the tale of the billy-goat bite. It's an explanation that, in its yoking together of high tragedy and low barnyard

MOTHER, FATHER, AND INFANT: CULVER PICTURES; HITLER (TOP ROW): POPPERFOTO, HULTON DEUTSCH; (BOTTOM ROW): POPPERFOTO, FPG INTERNATIONAL

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Young Hitler in Leonding, scene of a notorious schoolboy prank; Geli Raubal, whose death has been called a defining event in Hitler's life.







A 1932 Communist newspaper photomontage, which reads: "Adolf—the superman swallows gold and spouts junk"; Hitler parading on the mountaintop terrace of the Berghof, his Bavarian home, in 1937.

CHILD: ULLSTEIN BILDERDIENST; WOMAN: POPPERFOTO; POSTER: JOHN HEARTFIELD; FILM STRIP: BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK MÜNCHEN/FOTOARCHIV HOFFMAN

comedy, represents both a reductio ad absurdum of more high-minded attempts to explain Hitler and a prime example of explanation as consolation.

Sometime in mid-1943, after the tide had turned decisively against Hitler on the eastern front, German Army authorities arrested an obscure Army private named Eugen Wasner and shipped him back to Berlin to face a special court-martial and the guillotine. While the formal charge against Wasner was "maliciously slandering the Führer," the actual crime for which he faced beheading was his embarrassing explanation of Hitler.

Private Wasner's account was an extremely bloody variant of what might be called the genital-wound school of Hitler interpretation, a mode of thought that has at various times been employed to elucidate the prose of Henry James and the sanguinary appetite of Jeffrey Dahmer. It has led some to look for the source of Hitler's evil or pathology, whichever you choose to call it (and the choice is a hotly disputed one), in a putatively absent left testicle or in the deranging effects of a dose of syphilis. Some might say that it's the ultimate act of phallocentric thinking to insist that whatever was wrong with Adolf Hitler had to originate with his genitalia. But genital-wound explanations of Hitler have been rattling around in "Hitler studies" (as Don DeLillo dubbed the field in his novel "White Noise") for decades. Wasner's story first came to light in 1981, in a memoir published in Germany under the title "Tödlicher Alltag," or "Deadly Routine." Its author, Dietrich Güstrow, who was then a prominent attorney in the Federal Republic, and whose book was widely and respectfully reviewed, tells us that in 1943 he served as Private Wasner's defense counsel before the secret military tribunal that tried the soldier for slandering Hitler and sentenced him to death.

According to the lawyer's memoir, the occasion of Private Wasner's slander was a barracks bull session in which Private Wasner boasted that as a youth he had attended the same school as Adolf Hitler, in Leonding, Austria. Bitter about recent defeats on the eastern front, the private told his buddies, "Adolf has been warped ever since a billy goat took a bite out of his penis."

Wasner proceeded to give a graphic description of the bloody consequences of young Adolf's attempt to prove he could urinate in the mouth of a billy goat. A preposterous story on the face of it. And yet Güstrow declares forty years later, "Regarding the truth of Wasner's report, I never had any doubts." But Güstrow goes further than merely vouching for the truthfulness of the story. He makes explicit the implication of Wasner's report: the traumatic billy-goat bite as an explanation for Hitler's subsequent derangement. To Güstrow, that billy-goat bite was—like the single "shudder in the loins" in Yeats's "Leda and the Swan," like the single bite of the apple in Genesis—an act of blind appetite from which whole his-

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tories of sorrow and tragedy would ensue. In a sense, Güstrow's own appetite—his desire to find in this incident a single satisfying explanation for Hitler's psyche—is more revealing than the negligible value of his theory. It's an example of the appetite for single-pointed explanation—the yearning to find some decisive turning point in Hitler's biography that can explain Hitler and "engender" the Holocaust from his "craziness." A yearning that tells us as much about the explainer as about Hitler. For Güstrow, believing that a billy-goat bite explains Hitler, that a preposterous mishap created Nazi Germany, can be seen as a way of absolving German society—and himself—of implication in Hitler's crimes. The billy goat becomes the *scapegoat* upon which he projects—and thereby purges—his own guilt.

A WOOD IN THE RHINELAND: OCTOBER, 1944

A spill of white flowers on a hill.
A bouquet of stars.
I draw a pail of stars from the river
And take it back to my tent.
The path is furred with moss.
I hear the silken sound of wings.
I tell myself I'm happy,
And I am.
I haven't killed anyone today,
And I'm writing a letter.
I'm thinking of an aging, scarecrow God
Who sits at a window in the sky
From which he sees near and far
Through his bifocals
And sustains creation day by day.
Does he, too, culling, kill?
Does he sigh, like me, and vomit afterwards?

—STEPHEN STEPANCHEV

ONE paradox in attempting to explain Hitler is that there are already too many explanations. A tour of the literature of Hitler theories—both high and low—can yield the impression that Hitler's crimes were the most overdetermined events in history: that his life was an unending series of traumas, turning points, tragic twists of fate, metaphorical billy-goat bites; that epiphanies, awakenings, transformations, moments of metamorphosis are thick upon the ground at every stage of his existence.

Was it, in fact, the very ground itself that distorted him? Sir Isaiah Berlin, in "Against the Current," has advanced a thought-provoking borderland theory of charismatic political leadership which attributes the maniacally aggressive nationalism of such figures as Napoleon, Stalin, and Hitler to their geographical origins—their birth on the outlying marches, the borders of the empires they will later come to command and expand. (Hitler was born in 1889 in Braunau, an Austrian town just across the river from southern Germany.)

If it wasn't geography, was it genealogy? Did Hitler somehow learn during his childhood in Austria a "terrible" family secret: that his father had actually been fathered by a Jew? Several postwar psychoanalytic Hitler explainers (among them Robert Waite, a Williams College emeritus professor of history) have seized upon this recurrent rumor to suggest that Hitler's torment over the possibility that he was "tainted," "poisoned" by Jewish blood, was the secret engine of his anti-Semitism.

If it wasn't genealogy, was it chemotherapy? In 1907, Hitler, then eighteen, witnessed the agonizing death from cancer of his mother, who had been unsuccessfully treated by a Jewish doctor with the caustic chemical iodoform. Rudolph Binion, a professor of history at Brandeis, contends that Hitler's repressed anger at that Jewish doctor was the genesis of his hatred of Jews.

If it wasn't chemotherapy, was it pornography? Some historians, among them Alan Bullock, believe that there was "something sexual" to the highly charged quality of Hitler's anti-Semitism. As evidence of this, Robert Waite has pointed to an unusual interest Hitler seems to have developed in Vienna during his lost years (1908-13), after his mother's death and the failure of his artistic ambitions had plunged him into the lower depths of the city's homeless shelters. At some point in that period, Hitler appears to have become enamored of a lasciviously illustrated, semi-pornographic, anti-Semitic publication called *Ostara*, which was edited by a self-styled Aryan mystic named Lanz von Liebenfels. The American biographer John Toland and other writers argue that Hitler's own peculiarly sexualized variety of anti-Semitism was in part derived from Lanz's (and *Ostara's*) obsession with tales of lustful Jews using sexual exploitation to defile Aryan maidens. This obsession, they say, may have imprinted itself on the youthful Hitler's psyche and can be found echoed in passages of "Mein Kampf" redolent with sexual hysteria. "With satanic joy in his face," Hitler writes, "the black-haired Jewish youth lurks in wait for the unsuspecting girl whom he defiles with his blood."

If it wasn't pornography, was it hypnotherapy? There were many thousands of anti-Semites in Europe in those years, but only one became Adolf Hitler. Much postwar scholarship has been devoted to uncovering the event that transformed Hitler from ordinary anti-Semite to single-minded murderer of millions—the moment that convinced him he must make extermination of the Jews his mission. In the late seventies, two writers—Binion and Toland—independently advanced a startling hypothesis about the origins of Hitler's murderous ambition, focussing on an incident that took place five years after Hitler left Vienna. (Hitler had migrated to Munich in 1913 and enlisted in a Bavarian regiment of the German Army when the First World War broke out, in August of 1914.) They pointed to an episode at the very end of the war—one that Hitler himself described in "Mein Kampf" as a life-changing experience. Blinded by a poison-gas attack on the western front, Hitler was

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admitted to a military hospital in October of 1918. He appears to have recovered his sight for a while and then suffered a relapse—perhaps a form of "hysterical blindness"—when the news of Germany's humiliating defeat reached him. To others, Hitler described what happened next as a kind of miracle. In his blind, bedridden despair, he received a vision (or had a hallucination), heard a voice from above summoning him to a great destiny—to save Germany. It was then, the story goes, that he miraculously recovered his sight and vowed to devote himself to avenging Germany's defeat. Binion contends, however, that the voice Hitler heard was not a voice from above, as Hitler believed; it was the voice of a hypnotist. His name was Dr. Edmund Forster, and he was the ranking psychiatrist at Hitler's hospital. That much has been confirmed. Binion suggests, on the basis of fragmentary sources (a naval-intelligence debriefing of an Austrian psychiatrist and a thinly fictionalized account by a friend of Kafka's), that Dr. Forster cured Hitler's blindness by using then fashionable mesmeric techniques to put him in a trance and implant the belief that his beloved Germany needed him to recover his sight in order to serve the cause of national resurrection. In this view, Dr. Forster's spell worked all too well: in trying to cure Hitler, he transformed a previously obscure corporal into a monster.

Like the Jewish-blood and bungling-Jewish-doctor hypotheses, the mesmeric theory has come under fire. Waite, for one, argues that the sources are too vague and inadequate to sustain such a conjecture and that no records survive which prove that Dr. Forster attended Hitler. (Forster, though, seems to have claimed, shortly before committing suicide, in 1933, that the Gestapo was pursuing him for those very records.)

The hypnotist theory is perhaps the most sophisticated exemplar of a long-enduring quest in Hitler interpretation for some mesmeric secret: the key either to Hitler's own transformation or to his hypnotic power over his audiences. An enduring if hypnotic apocryphal tradition attributes that power to some occult initiation. Hitler himself invoked metaphors of hypnotic trance when he described himself as someone who moved inexorably toward his goals with the "precision and security of a sleepwalker."

THE search for the hypnotist who created a mesmeric Hitler may reflect our own longing to understand not just his mesmeric power over Germany but the distressing way he continues to mesmerize us—yet another instance of how Hitler explanations hold up a dark mirror to our own anxieties.

Consider, in this light, two particularly revealing explanatory patterns that have emerged in the past two decades, patterns that constitute two remarkable reversals: the tendency to see Hitler as a victim, and the apparent need to find a Jew to blame. Recently, I came across on TV an arresting example of Hitler seen through the lens of American popular culture in the nineties, Hitler integrated into the explanatory framework of pop victimology: Hitler as a serial killer suffering from low self-esteem.

In November of 1991, "Unsolved Mysteries," the enormously popular "reality" television series, devoted a "special edition" to a topic that was something of a departure from its usual fare of U.F.O. sightings and psychic-healer probes—an hour given over entirely to "Diabolical Minds: Case Studies." What this turned out to be was a series of portraits, including brief segments about Ted Bundy, John Wayne Gacy, and Adolf Hitler. Grouped with the others in this way, Hitler becomes just another serial killer, the most prolific one of all time, yes, but basically a kind of workaholic Hannibal Lecter—a figure explicable in the psychobabble of serial-killer pseudoscience as the victim of a dysfunctional family. Of Hitler's father, the narrator tells us, "Many believe his physical and emotional abuse virtually destroyed his son's self-esteem." Had there been more time, perhaps problems with Hitler's "inner child" might have been invoked. But the real explanation turned out to be that terrifying contemporary plague: poor self-image. Thus, the segment on Hitler concluded that "he felt compelled to subjugate millions to avenge his own deep feelings of inferiority."

Absurd as this theory sounds, it does



"Neil Simon, where are you?"

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offer a kind of consolation on a couple of levels. For one thing, the explanation makes Hitler a more familiar figure. We know serial killers, or think we do by now. We've met their families on "Oprah" and know they don't just spring from some primordial ooze. Some of us are even charmed by Hannibal Lecter: if you set aside the cannibalism, he can be good company. Though Hitler was far worse, "Unsolved Mysteries" suggested, we know his type. That alone—that he is a familiar type, not a revelation of some new, previously unfathomed depth of evil in human nature—may to some degree be comforting.

We can laugh at "Unsolved Mysteries," and yet two purportedly more sophisticated psychological interpretations of Hitler, by renowned psychoanalytic savants, also ask us to empathize with Hitler: one calls him a victim of an abusive father, the other of an overindulgent mother.

The principal champion of the abusive-father theory is the psychologist Alice Miller, the author of "The Drama of the Gifted Child" and "For Your Own Good." In the latter work, which argues that the abusive punishment of children is the root of all evil, Miller presents us with a fifty-five-page Hitler explanation that could be entitled "The Drama of the Poor Abused Child Adolf." Miller declares, on the basis of sketchy evidence, that his father, Alois, beat him violently, and, on the basis of even sketchier evidence, that Alois's brutality stemmed from his rage at his origins—from the rumor that Alois was the bastard son of a Jew, who had seduced Alois's unmarried mother, Maria Schicklgruber. One can understand Miller's desire to advance her worthy child-centered agenda through Hitler: if she can prove that this embodiment of evil was created by childhood beatings, the proof will buttress her brief for abolishing punishment for children. But there are times when her analysis amounts to special pleading on behalf of the child Adolf. Consider the shocking way she deals with objections from some historians that Hitler's father was not the child beater that Hitler later portrays him as. To which Miller replies: "As if anyone were more qualified to judge the situation than Adolf Hitler himself." Yes, and who more worthy of our trust and the presumption of honesty? Because Hitler was once a child, Miller seems to be saying, he cannot tell a lie about his childhood. Believe the child, even if the child was Adolf Hitler.

An inadvertently parodic counterpoint to Miller's demonization of Hitler's father can be found in the work of Erich Fromm, an equally respected and even more renowned psychoanalytic thinker: he singles out not Hitler's father but his mother, Klara. Fromm's version of Alois is not the abusive monster Miller portrays. Fromm assures us that Alois was a well-meaning, stable fellow, who "loved life," whose devotion to his honeybees was admirable, and who was "authoritarian" but "not a frightening figure." Instead, Fromm tells us, Hitler's mother, Klara, was the catalyst of his neuroses. In his retrospective psychoanalysis of Hitler (published in his 1973 book, "The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness") Fromm confidently assures us that Hitler can be explained by Fromm's own "necrophilia" theory, which postulates a love of death and dead bodies and, consequently, the inclination to commit mass murder. Fromm asserts that this "necrophilous character system" had its origins in the "malignant incestuousness" of Hitler's attachment to his mother. "Germany became the central symbol for mother," Fromm writes. Hitler's fixations, his hatred for the "poison" (syphilis and Jews) that threatened Germany, actually concealed a deeper, long-repressed desire to destroy his mother.

Fromm's serene confidence in these grandiose abstractions and his unsupported leaps of logic based on them are breathtaking as he proceeds to his conclusion: Hitler's deepest hatred wasn't Jews—it was Germans! Germans symbolized his highly fraught relationship with his mother. He made war against the Jews because his real goal was to ignite a worldwide conflagration in order to cause the destruction of Germany.

Theories of Hitler as the unfortunate victim of bad parenting (the Menendez defense of Hitler, one could say) are just a subset of a whole litany of attempts to explain (or explain away) Hitler as suffering from mental illness—an explanation that tends to exculpate him on the ground of what the courts call "diminished capacity," an inability to know right from wrong.

To these mental-illness theories can be added a strain of explanation that attributes Hitler's state of mind to a physical illness, thus removing him even further from conscious culpability. One of the most curious and revealing of these germ theories of Hitler has been Simon Wiesenthal's persistent, if quixotic, quest to explain Hitler's psyche as the by-product of a case of syphilis. Wiesenthal, long known as the preëminent hunter of Nazi war criminals, has been trying to track down—with the same determina-



"Howard is my most male friend."

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tion he has applied to hunting escaped S.S. men in South America—the spectral spirochete that he believes was responsible for deranging Hitler.

Wiesenthal's devotion to this, of all possible Hitler-explanation theories, is certainly puzzling at first glance. The syphilitic-Hitler theory had been a feature of prewar rumor but had fallen into neglect until Wiesenthal attempted to revive it in the late nineteen-eighties. Puzzling also is the particular variant of the Hitler-syphilis story he has chosen to promote—a version in which the putative source of Hitler's infection was not just a prostitute in the Viennese lower depths (as in some versions) but specifically a Jewish prostitute. Her Jewishness then becomes Wiesenthal's explanation for the elusive grail of Hitler studies—the origin of his anti-Semitism. And the syphilis—the mentally deranging effects of the final stage of the disease—exacerbated his paranoia about Jews. Wiesenthal's syphilis theory becomes then a prime example of both the Hitler-as-victim trend and the concurrent misguided tendency to seek a Jew to blame. The prostitute joins a roster of Jewish "suspects," which by this time includes the Jewish doctor who treated Hitler's mother, the rumored Jewish seducer of Hitler's unmarried grandmother, and the rumored Jewish seducer of Hitler's half niece, and perhaps lover, Geli Raubal.

But Wiesenthal, now eighty-six, seems deadly serious in his quest for confirmation of this theory, despite the fact that evidence for the existence of a Jewish prostitute who had sex with Hitler (evidence for the existence of *anyone* who had sex with Hitler) is negligible. Despite the lack of evidence, it's clear that Wiesenthal wants to believe in this Jewish succubus. But why? What's the explanation for his explanation? Even if he found her, and somehow identified her as the bearer of the germ of Hitler's anti-Semitism, what could be the point? Wouldn't it inevitably tend to do something utterly unjust: make it seem as if the whole weight of the Holocaust should come down on the fragile shoulders of one poor woman of the streets?

One possible answer is that for someone like Wiesenthal, who has personally experienced the horror of the death camps, felt the hatred that killed millions all around him, it might in some way be preferable to have an unjust explanation of that hatred than an inexplicable hatred. Bad logic to explain an unimaginable tragedy is preferable to no logic. The Jewish-prostitute story may be cold comfort but better that than no comfort at all.



"I'm afraid our flowers don't say things like that."

• •

WHAT has been lost, of course, in the search for a scapegoat is a sense of Hitler's own responsibility. Hitler disappears from these explanations, and is replaced by the person or the disease that "caused" him. Hitler also disappears in recently fashionable Great Abstraction theories, which argue that Christian anti-Semitism or capitalism or European racism or modernism produced Hitler. Here, too, explanation serves as consolation. If Hitler was an inevitable result of these larger forces, then nothing could have prevented the war or the genocide. If these larger forces would have produced a Hitler anyway, then Hitler's personal motives become irrelevant. The disturbing alternative is to believe that a single individual possessed the intent, had the will to bring about the horror—a notion some might find incomprehensible, and possibly unbearable.

But Great Abstraction theories have themselves aroused an impassioned counter-reaction—a call for a return to a focus on the person of Hitler, summed up by the title of an influential 1984 essay in *Commentary* by the scholar Milton Himmelfarb: "No Hitler, No Holocaust." Himmelfarb's target is the Great Abstraction theory that singles out Christian anti-Semitism as the true source of the Holocaust, but he argues that traditional anti-Semitism alone is not sufficient: "All that history . . . could have been the same and Hitler could as easily, more easily, not have murdered the Jews. He could more advantageously have tightened the screws of oppression," as anti-Semitic tyrants had done in the past, without attempting

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complete extermination. That decision was Hitler's alone, Himmelfarb insists: Hitler murdered the Jews not because he had to, not because he was being dictated to by abstract historical forces, but "because he wanted to."

He wanted to. It's remarkable that the decisiveness of Hitler's desire should have become so controversial. But, as with such other paradoxical reversals as Hitler-as-victim and the search for a Jew to blame, the debate over the very nature of Hitler's desire has become emblematic of the uncertainties that still cloud the whole enterprise of Hitler explanations.

There was a moment during my conversation with Emil Fackenheim, the foremost "theologian of the Holocaust," as *Commentary* has called him, that epitomized for me how sharp are the schisms over the fundamental nature of Hitler's desire. Fackenheim is famous for arguing that Hitler cannot be explained by the existing methods and theories of history and psychology—that his evil is so extreme that it is not even on the same continuum as the rest of humanity. For Fackenheim, Hitler represents an evil that only theology can explain.

It was a hot June afternoon two years ago in Jerusalem, and Fackenheim, an energetic seventy-seven, was dressed in a polo shirt, Bermuda shorts, and sandals. He was telling me that he had made a close study of the explanatory literature before concluding that explanation had failed, and that he had some strong feelings about certain aspects of the conventional wisdom. Fackenheim recalled something once written about Hitler's final words, his deathbed testament. "You know Robert Waite's book?" Fackenheim asked, referring to Waite's psychohistorical study "The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler." "It's a very good book, but I think he made a few mistakes. One thing Waite says is 'Nobody goes to his death with a lie.' " (What Waite actually wrote is that the deathbed testament is "quintessential Hitler.")

In Hitler's last words to the world—in the midst of the destruction he'd brought upon his own people with his war against the Jews—he exhorted the German government and people to continue the battle to the death with the Jews, the "universal poisoners of all nations."

"Waite believes that since Hitler went to his death with his famous testament of hating Jews, that must have been the true Hitler," Fackenheim said. "But it's completely false! Hitler, who posed all his life, who could never believe anything until he had the crowd before him to cheer him, went to his death like an actor. For posterity."

In other words, Hitler's deathbed testament was a fraud, a piece of deception designed to maintain his act as a crusader who died for the "great cause" of anti-Semitism. Fackenheim's view implies that Hitler was, first and last, an opportunist, who believed in nothing but his own ambition and used anti-Semitism only to advance it. "Look at his marriage," said Fackenheim, who later told me he had no doubt that Hitler was "a strange sexual pervert." "His wedding"—to Eva Braun—"just before his death. What does that mean? It was all a performance."

I asked the obvious question: "Are you saying he didn't even believe in his anti-Semitism?"

"I don't think he knew the difference between acting and believing," Fackenheim replied, and then added a devastating fillip: "Of course, it's a shocking thing to consider that six million Jews were murdered because of an actor."

But it seemed to me that there was something more than bitter irony behind the black humor of that remark—that it represented Fackenheim's ultimate effort to rescue Hitler from the sinkhole of explanation, to preserve him from mitigation, to assign to him the highest degree of evil. By characterizing Hitler's apparently implacable hatred of Jews as merely an actor's trick, by thus denying him the "virtue" of passionate sincerity (or the pity perhaps due to a victim of a pathological mental illness), Fackenheim deflects, even derails, the entire project of Hitler explanation. Most explainers have focussed on finding the source of the pathological fury of Hitler's hatred of the Jews—a hatred that Fackenheim suggests was not pathology but pure, cold-blooded calculation.

And thus all the more evil. Evil for evil's sake, evil inexplicable by illness or ideology and all the more inexcusable. "Radical evil," a term Fackenheim uses to define a phenomenon that goes beyond the number of the victims—a new category of evil. While it might seem at first glance not terribly controversial to call Adolf Hitler evil, Fackenheim has in fact put his finger on another fault line in Hitler explanation—the surprising reluctance of some of those who have written about Hitler to consider him *consciously* evil rather than someone who perpetrated evil acts in the sincere belief that he was doing good.

It is precisely this question—whether Hitler was cynical or sincere—that is at the heart of the great divide between the two most influential Hitler explainers in the English-speaking world: Hugh Trevor-Roper and Alan Bullock. While thousands upon thousands of books and monographs have followed, it is their two seminal works, written shortly after the war—Trevor-Roper's "The Last Days of Hitler" (1947) and Bullock's "Hitler: A Study in Tyranny" (1952)—that have defined the poles of a fundamental debate about Hitler that continues to this day.

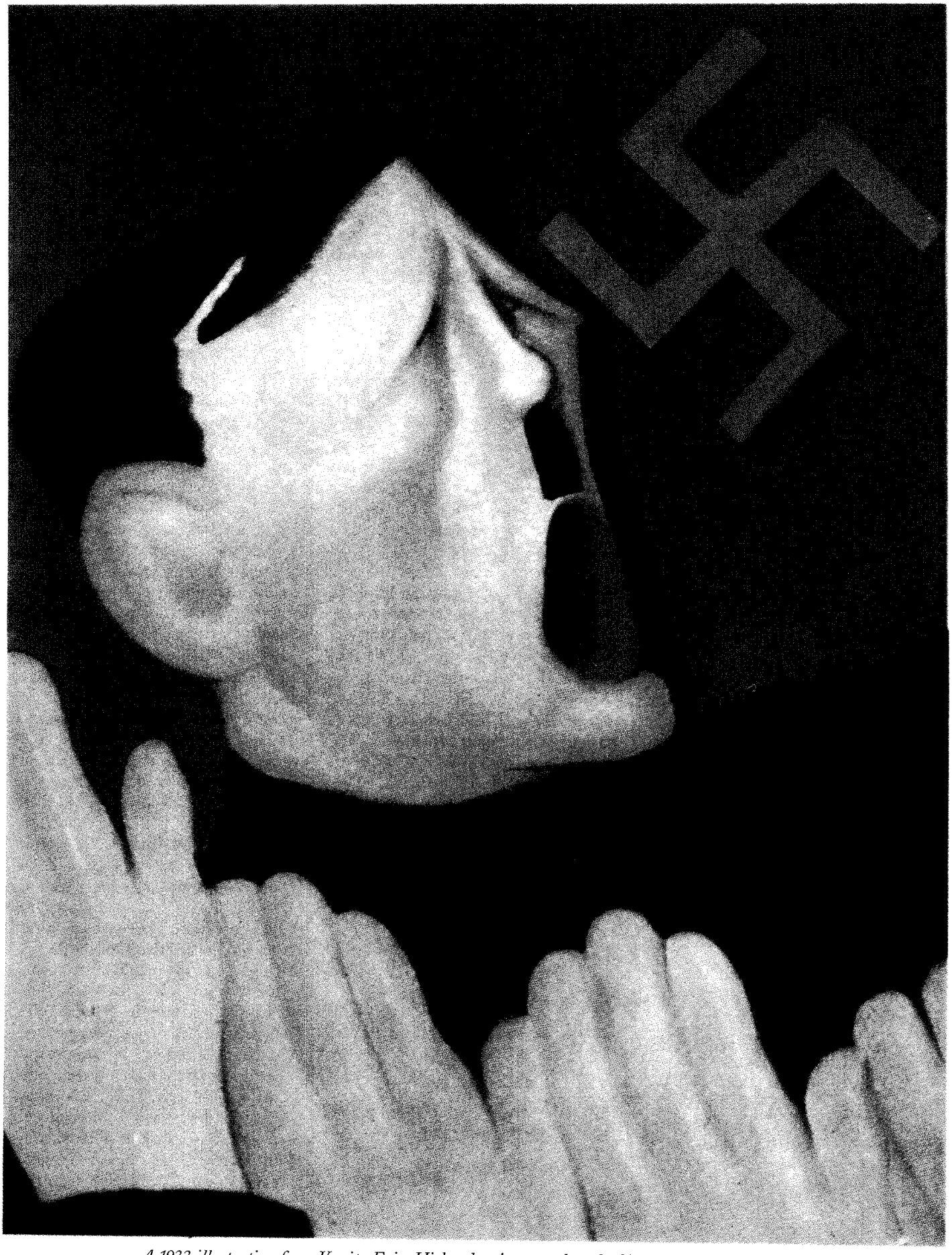
THE death threat was postmarked Lisbon. Hugh Trevor-Roper remembers that detail well. Recalling it this autumn evening, in front of a roaring fire in a common room of the Oxford and Cambridge Club in London, he treats the threat, which he received shortly after the publication of "The Last Days of Hitler," as an amusing footnote now, although he seems to have taken it seriously at the time.

"It was from the Stern Gang," Trevor-Roper recalled, referring to the Jewish underground guerrilla group in Palestine, which had demonstrated its willingness to engage in political assassination. The death sentence, Trevor-Roper says, was the Stern Gang's way of expressing its disapproval of his vision of Hitler in "The Last Days." But it was more than a footnote. It was an early signal of how highly charged Hitler explanations would become in the postwar world, and of what was really at stake—the nature of Hitler's posthumous survival.

Trevor-Roper's "The Last Days of Hitler" was not only one of the first Hitler books but one of the most famous and influential. (It is still in print, a million copies and forty-eight years later.) The book reflected Trevor-Roper's strength as a historian (the meticulous scholarship that would eventually enable him to rise to perhaps the most illustrious post in the profession, Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford) and as an intelligence operative (he distinguished himself during the war as an M.I.6 counterintelligence specialist). As a title, "The Last Days of Hitler" is somewhat misleading. While Hitler's

WILL COTTON

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A 1933 illustration from Vanity Fair. Hitler theories are cultural self-portraits in the negative, ways of distancing ourselves from him. And ways of protecting ourselves.

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final weeks in the Berlin bunker are the focus of the book, it is more than a study of his end; it is a full-blooded evocation of who he was and of the power of his charisma.

The book began as an intelligence mission. In June of 1945, Soviet officials deliberately started spreading the lie that Adolf Hitler was still alive, and being harbored in the British zone of occupation in Berlin for nefarious joint operations against the Soviet Union. To find out the truth about Hitler's fate, British Intelligence dispatched Trevor-Roper to Berlin. Once there, he threw himself into the task, descending into the bombed-out, waterlogged ruins of the bunker; tracking down and interrogating Hitler's officers, aides, secretaries, and flunkies (including those who'd soaked their leader's dead body with gasoline and set it on fire). By the time he was through he'd precisely documented Hitler's whereabouts, moment by moment, from April 20th, the Führer's last birthday, through April 30th—the day of his suicide.

The irony of Trevor-Roper's intelligence mission is that, while he succeeded brilliantly in establishing the fact of Hitler's physical death, the book he later wrote played an important role in Hitler's metaphysical survival—gave him a kind of life after death. The source of this resurrection was something he hadn't expected to find—a deeper mystery than whether Hitler had physically survived: the survival of the Hitler spell. While one might have expected to encounter the power of that spell when Hitler was a demagogue on the rise or after he'd become the triumphant Führer, Trevor-Roper was surprised at the extent to which, even after ignominious defeat, the spell still held sway among those in Hitler's inner circle.

"Even in the bunker, when all the buildings of Berlin are falling down on top of him, even when he was dead they carried out his wishes," Trevor-Roper told me, still fascinated by the phenomenon. "They stayed behind! They stayed there until he was dead, and when he was dead they exposed themselves"—to bombs—"and carried out Hitler's last wishes."

"People have described this as mesmeric power—do you think it's literally mesmerism?" I asked.

"He certainly had an extraordinary power," Trevor-Roper replied. "When he wanted to mesmerize, he did have this effect. It didn't work on everyone. It didn't work on—to put it crudely—aristocrats or on people who were sensitive to the vulgarity of his behavior."

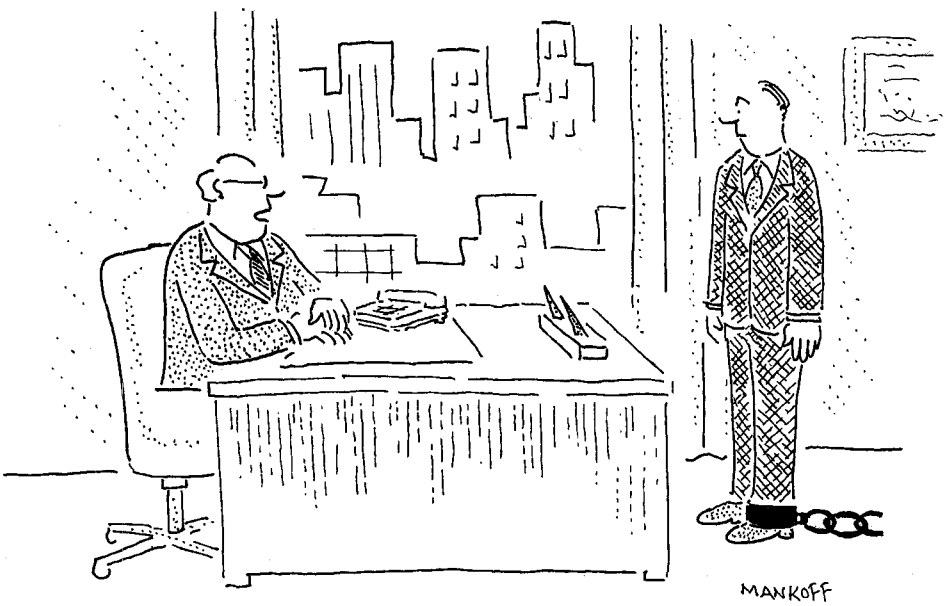
It is hard to imagine Trevor-Roper—in every respect the embodiment of the waspish don, from his Oxbridge tweeds to the bone-dry ironies of his speech and prose—succumbing to the spell of a dead dictator. But, as he wrote in an essay revisiting "The Last Days" in a 1989 issue of *Encounter*, "I have been accused of having exalted Adolf Hitler, of having created a public image of him as the genius of National Socialism: indeed, of being the prime author of that myth, almost the post-War successor of Dr. Goebbels."

If the Stern Gang was Trevor-Roper's most menacing critic, his most thoughtful one has been Professor Alvin Rosenfeld, the director of the Jewish Studies Program at Indiana University and the author of a 1985 study of postwar Hitler fiction and fantasy entitled "Imagining Hitler." Trevor-Roper was not writing fiction, of course, but his spellbinding, cinematic vision of Hitler, Rosenfeld argues, became the defining image, the ur-Hitler for the decades of pulp fiction and film that followed.

The essence of Rosenfeld's critique is that in attempting to describe Hitler's spell Trevor-Roper fell under it—and that his book perpetuated it. In trying to explain how this happened to the respected Oxford scholar, Rosenfeld himself seems drawn to a subdued version of the occult rhetoric of possession he criticizes in Trevor-Roper. Rosenfeld says that when Trevor-Roper wrote about Hitler "the fiction writer within the scholar seemed to come alive," as if some dark being within Trevor-Roper had been awakened by exposure to Hitler's spell, to take possession of the otherwise scrupulously rational scholar.

Rosenfeld cites, in particular, Trevor-Roper's description of Hitler's eyes, which concludes, "The fascination of those eyes, which had bewitched so many seemingly sober men. . . . Hitler had the eyes of a hypnotist which seduced the wits and affections of all who yielded to their power. . . . This personal magnetism remained with him to the end; and only by reference to it can we explain the extraordinary obedience which he still commanded in the last week of his life."

It is Rosenfeld's thesis that Trevor-Roper's resort to "the special language of the occult sciences," his use of words like "wizard" and "enchanter," gave birth to the occult-messiah version of Hitler that became a fixture of postwar literature. And yet despite the criticism that he mythologized Hitler, Trevor-Roper has never backed down from his belief that there was something irrational at the heart of Hitler's appeal, "a frightening mystery" not explicable by the traditional tools of historical and psychological analysis. Rather, the thrust of Trevor-Roper's defense against the criticism—at least, in my conversa-



"Why, Ferber, I'm surprised to find you away from your desk."

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MARRIAGES

are not the same—surely you knew that.
Boats, cars without names: a vehicle,
and another vehicle. What something's called
is not its brand name necessarily.

The light world, of being touched then cynical.
The dark world, of being moved then scared.
The speckle-splayed game-bird world
that runs, then flies, between them.

Things speak differently, house to house.
What each house eats is addition
plus subtraction. What a wife brings,
a husband: what food he'll eat,

what she can stand—a pan of chaos
and resolution. Misunderstanding speaks
as a conscious choice—as if—and says
its minuscule reasons. Here he had thought

she would want the yardful of money.
You couldn't guess from the light on the lake,
the latitude, how she in fact found
intolerable, baffling, his working-all-hours

absence. Anyhow: Sing of the certainties,
the solid post holding itself to and against the beam
(sturdied by gravity) in post-and-beam construction,
the hopelessly hopeful intention in old-style building.

—ELIZABETH MACKLIN

tion with him—consisted of a counter-thrust: an attack on the opposing school of Hitler explanation embodied by his rival Hitler biographer Alan Bullock.

In fact, throughout our talk Trevor-Roper returned repeatedly and vigorously to what he believes is the key inadequacy of the original Bullock vision: the belief that Hitler can be explained in the same terms as traditional historical models, like the Caesars and the Napoleons. It's a view that Bullock first advanced in the 1952 "Study in Tyranny." Bullock's eight-hundred-page biography is more comprehensive than Trevor-Roper's "Last Days" and focusses far more on Hitler's manipulative political skills than on the emotional magnetism that fascinated Trevor-Roper. In a sense, Bullock's concern with the gritty machinations of backroom politics may reflect the class differences between him and the patrician Trevor-Roper. The middle-class Yorkshireman Bullock is impatient with high-flown notions of mesmeric attraction.

"It's a good book," Trevor-Roper said, prefacing his assessment of Bullock with faint praise. What he objects to, however, is Bullock's vision of Hitler—what Trevor-Roper calls the "mountebank Hitler." "This was influential right after the war," Trevor-Roper told me. "And in Alan Bullock's book he described Hitler as an opportunist who was solely concerned with acquiring power."

"Mountebank" is a word little used these days, which is unfortunate, because the word does have an expressive power that conjures up a whole world view. Derived from the old Italian phrase for "mount-on-bench," a mountebank is described by the O.E.D. as "an itinerant quack who appealed to his audience by means of stories, tricks, juggling, and the like." A grander figure than a mere con man or charlatan, the mountebank is a figure of public life, often a politician—one who practices his charlatanry from a public platform. At the core of the mountebank characterization is cynicism and manipulativeness. The mountebank may pose as a true believer, as one possessed by a grand mission, but it is all "tricks, juggling, and the like." Indeed, this is the actor-Hitler that Emil Fackenheim insists upon. By contrast, the essence of Trevor-Roper's vision of Hitler is that he was not an actor but a true believer, a man of conviction, however wicked those convictions were—not a cynic but, rather, horrifically sincere. It's a position that Trevor-Roper articulated most strikingly when I asked him whether he thought Hitler knew that his actions were evil.

"Oh, no," Trevor-Roper said firmly. "He was convinced of his own rectitude."

One has to hear Trevor-Roper pronounce the word "rectitude," with such plentitude of rectitude himself. He almost succeeds in endowing a sincere belief in genocide with a kind of perverse dignity. This is not his intention, of course. He certainly means to say that Hitler was dreadfully, *mistakenly* "convinced of his own rectitude," but that Hitler nonetheless genuinely believed that the Jews were trying to destroy the Aryan race and had to be destroyed—in self-defense.

Trevor-Roper traces the origin of his belief that Hitler was sincere to his own reading of "Mein Kampf," in German, back in 1938 (before Hitler permitted a full English translation). What "Mein Kampf" revealed to him about Hitler was something that few scholars and political figures took seriously before the war. "There was a powerful and coherent, if horrible, message which he had thought out, a philosophy," Trevor-Roper said. "He obviously took himself deadly seriously. He was not, as Bullock calls him, an adventurer. He considered himself a rare phenomenon, such as appears only once in centuries. It was not a joke that he was selling."

In other words, he was not a mountebank?

"Well, the conventional wisdom about Hitler before the war—at least, until Munich—was that he was a sort of clown, that he was taken off from the music hall. He looked ridiculous. He had this Charlie Chaplin mustache and he

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made these ranting speeches, and people couldn't take him seriously." He paused. "After Munich, they had to take him seriously."

Again and again, Trevor-Roper returned to the attack on what he insisted was the wrongheadedness of the mountebank-Hitler concept that Bullock bequeathed the postwar world. It was almost as if Bullock's Hitler were the real enemy. "He was not an adventurer," Trevor-Roper reiterated emphatically at one point. "At the end of the war, the Allied line was that Hitler was an adventurer, an irresponsible opportunist."

The mountebank idea still had the capacity to infuriate Trevor-Roper. "The question was why the Germans followed an irresponsible opportunist. But the fact is that he nearly won the war. If he *had* won the war—and it was by a whisker he didn't, I think there were three or four moments in the war when he really could have won it—historians would be saying to you he was, as he saw himself, this great historical figure. I was the odd man out at the time."

I found it fascinating that, at the age of eighty-one, Trevor-Roper could still become so impassioned on this point. For him, it seemed not just an embattled academic position but an article of faith. Indeed, over the years Trevor-Roper's predilection for believing in Hitler's sincerity has been nothing if not consistent. It's certainly there in his most illuminating essay on Hitler, "The Mind of Adolf Hitler," which appeared as the introduction to the 1953 edition of Hitler's "Secret Conversations," also known as the "Table Talk."

"You believe that the Hitler of the 'Table Talk' is the real Hitler—that he's not posing?" I asked him.

"Oh, it's the real Hitler," Trevor-Roper replied. "Oh, yes, oh, yes, no doubt about it."

The "Table Talk" dates back to mid-1941, when Hitler established his underground command post for running the war on the eastern front. His nightly routine was highly consistent. After midnight, tea and cakes would be served, and Hitler would relax with his personal staff, including several young secretaries, a couple of congenial aides, and a guest or two from the outside world. Then, beginning around 2 A.M., and sometimes continuing until dawn, when he finally went to sleep, Hitler would hold forth to his captive audience for hour upon hour, pontificating upon the world situation, history, art, philosophy, literature, opera, culture, and, above all, his vision of the Brave New Aryan Future.

Prevailed upon by the flattery of his increasingly powerful aide, Martin Bormann, to permit a stenographer to attend these sessions, so that none of the pearls of wisdom he dispensed would be lost, Hitler relished the idea that he was speaking for history. Bormann would take the transcripts from the stenographer and knit together the raw flow of Hitler's words, editing, refining, polishing, constructing a testament to Hitler's thought process—his stream of consciousness as he wanted history to see it.

My own response to the "Table Talk" is far more equivocal than Trevor-Roper's: that, at best, it's the real *counterfeit* Hitler. Even though the words are, for the most part, Hitler's, it's as false a creation as the "Hitler Diaries" of a decade ago. In a sense, the "Table Talk" is Hitler's own Hitler-diary hoax.

Here, for example, we have Hitler on the evening of October 24, 1941, piously declaring, "The Ten Commandments are a code of living to which there's no refutation. These precepts correspond to irrefragable needs of the human soul; they're inspired by the best religious spirit."

Is this a Hitler convinced of his own rectitude or a Hitler *posing* as someone convinced of his own rectitude? Perhaps the best answer to that comes in the "Table Talk" entry for the very next evening, in a revealing discussion of the Final Solution that may be Hitler's consummate lie.

What makes this lie so astonishing is that it's delivered to the two men who are in the best position to know what an enormous falsehood it is—the "special guests" in the command post, the S.S. and Gestapo chief, Heinrich Himmler, and his chief lieutenant in the S.S., Reinhard Heydrich. To them, his closest confederates in carrying out the Final Solution (which in the preceding months had accelerated to programmatic mass extermination), Hitler, in an obviously staged performance, delivers himself of these chilling reflections:

> From the rostrum of the Reichstag, I prophesied [in 1939] to Jewry that, in the event of war's proving inevitable, the Jew would disappear from Europe. That race of criminals has on its conscience the two million dead of the First World War and now already hundreds of thousands more. Let nobody tell me that all the same we can't park them in the marshy parts of Russia! Who's worrying about our troops? It's not a bad idea, by the way, that public rumor attributes to us a plan to exterminate the Jews. Terror is a salutary thing.

This is not the language of a man "convinced of his own rectitude" in exterminating Jews. This is a man so convinced of his own criminality that he

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must deny that the crime is happening (it's only a "rumor," which, though "salutary," is not true); must surround that backhanded denial with disinformation (we are "parking" the Jews in the marshy parts of conquered Russian territory, not murdering them); must preface that disinformation with a justification for the act disingenuously denied ("That race of criminals has on its conscience the two million dead"—and therefore if the "rumor" were true the killing would be just).

One tries to imagine the glances that Hitler, Himmler, and Heydrich must have exchanged during the orchestration of this elaborate charade. The three Holocaust perpetrators here become the first Holocaust deniers, establishing the pattern for the "revisionists" who followed: the Holocaust didn't happen, but, if it did, the Jews deserved it. If this is "the real Hitler," as Trevor-Roper declares, the realness is to be found in his slippery falseness, not in the "sincerity" that Trevor-Roper persists in finding in him.

Trevor-Roper's obliviousness on this question is perhaps what was responsible for getting him into trouble in the 1983 Hitler-diaries affair. In "Selling Hitler," Robert Harris's account of that fiasco, Trevor-Roper repeatedly professes himself unwilling to doubt the bona fides of the con men peddling the diaries. Asked to judge their authenticity by Rupert Murdoch, who was considering purchasing them for the *Times* of London, Trevor-Roper (by then Lord Dacre) initially pronounced them genuine. But just as the *Times* was about to go to press with the big scoop, Trevor-Roper changed his mind. He quickly called the editor, Frank Giles, to urge him to stop the presses. In Harris's account, another editor reached Murdoch, advised him of Trevor-Roper's qualms, and asked his boss what to do. In one of the legendary moments of contemporary journalism, Murdoch replied, "Fuck Dacre! Publish!"

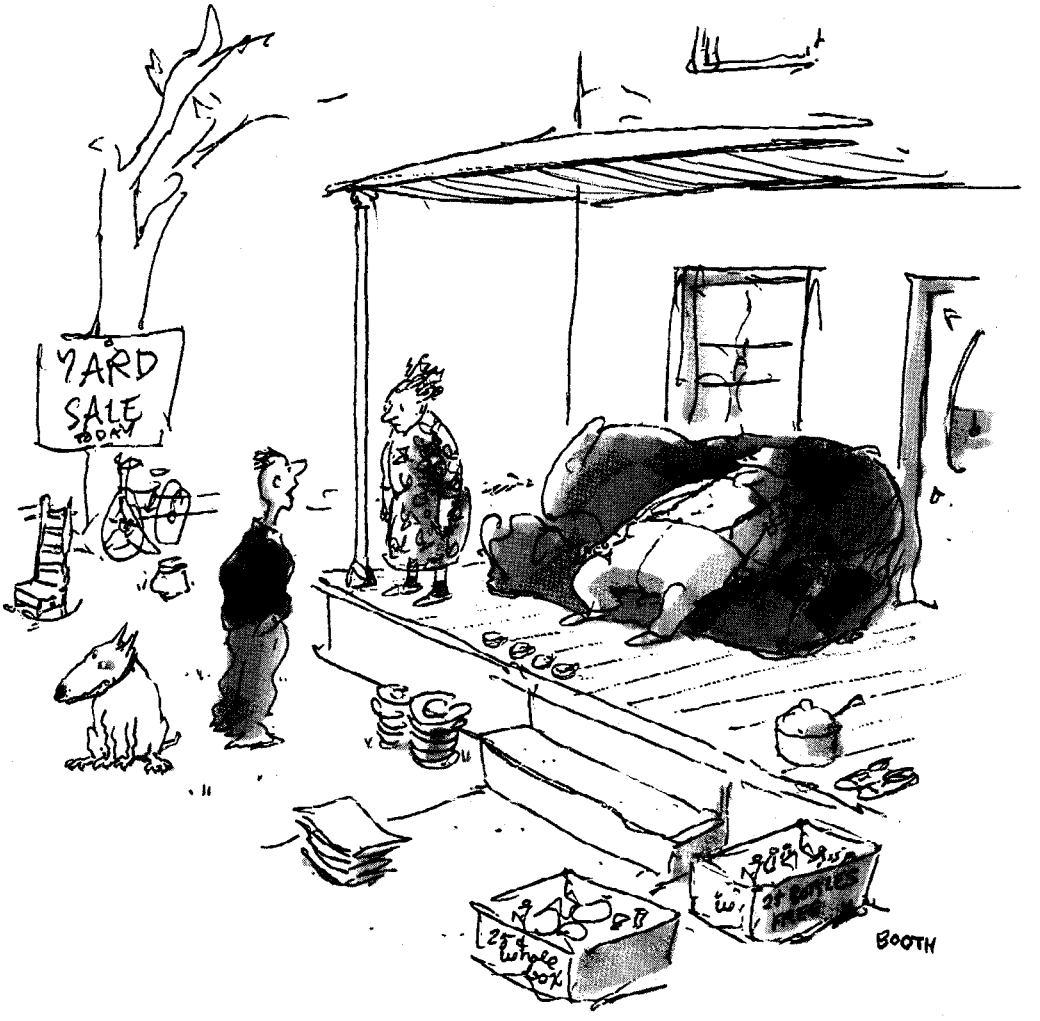
This propensity to presume the sincerity of characters that others see as mountebanks—from Hitler to the Hitler-diary hoaxers—is surprising in a man of Trevor-Roper's sophistication but may have something to do with his distance from their more plebeian class origins. Yet there's something more to it than that—another instance in which a Hitler explanation tells us something unexpected about the explainer. It's almost as though Trevor-Roper is refusing to entertain the idea of a human soul depraved enough to carry out Hitler's crimes *without* being convinced of his own rectitude. Perhaps Trevor-Roper simply cannot let go of a stubbornly optimistic faith that human nature is incapable of so radical an evil.

A noisy chess match in the common room of the Oxford and Cambridge Club had made conversation difficult, and Trevor-Roper was late for his next appointment, yet before leaving he brought up the subject of the "Table Talk" one more time. He was speaking about an error in the initial translation which had Hitler saying, "I feel quite confused." "Now, Hitler was never confused about anything," Trevor-Roper told me. The word should have been "embarrassed."

What struck me most forcefully about that statement was Trevor-Roper's absolute confidence in his grasp of Hitler's thought world: Hitler was never confused about anything, but he *was* subject to embarrassment.

The issue of Hitler's embarrassment brought to mind one of the most disquieting Hitler stories I'd ever heard, the story of "the newborn babe." Disquieting in part because of its source—David Irving, the controversial historian and Holocaust "revisionist." And disquieting because, despite its source, it seemed to me one of the most chilling portrayals of Hitler's thought world I'd come upon.

In his London study, Irving had been boasting of how he'd penetrated what he called "the magic circle"—that select group of aides who had stayed with Hitler in the bunker to the bitter end. How, late one night, one of those closest to Hitler for the longest period of time,



"How much for the couch without the potato?"

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his personal secretary, Christa Schroeder, had disclosed to Irving an encounter with Hitler in the aftermath of the Night of the Long Knives, in June, 1934—the night Hitler had his former S.A. generals murdered. "You know he could be quite cruel," Christa Schroeder told Irving. "At the end of this bloody day when they were going to take them all up to prison to be shot, we flew back to Berlin and I'd lost sight of Hitler in the Chancellery for a while. And I went to the cafeteria. You know, it was quite late, but he joined me because we were both vegetarians. He came in an hour later, stood in the doorway, and he says, 'So Fräulein Schroeder, now I have had a bath and I am as clean as a newborn babe again.' "

" 'Clean as a newborn babe'—meaning from the blood?" I asked Irving.

"That's right," Irving said. "She found it symptomatic of the facility with which he committed mass murder," he added matter-of-factly. "That he just had to have a bath and was as clean as a new-born baby."

"He leaves the blood behind in—"

"Went down the plughole," Irving assented enthusiastically. "Like the blood in 'Psycho.' "

What struck me about this extraordinary story was the way it spoke to the Trevor-Roper–Bullock dispute. It was Hitler mocking the very notion that he could be embarrassed by the blood on his hands. In depicting himself as a "newborn babe," he is practically flaunting his own baby pictures—those tokens of innocence which Claude Lanzmann finds so troubling. He is laughing at the absurdity of his blood-drenched self as a newborn babe. Rather than being convinced of his own rectitude, he is making an obscene joke of it.

But does it really matter what Hitler thought about what he did? Certainly it does not matter to his millions of victims. The question does matter, however, to the world that survived, because ultimately Hitler explanations are ways of talking about the nature of human nature, the nature of evil.

"If you ask me what I think evil is," Alan Bullock said to me as we approached the pillared façade of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, "it's the incomplete."

"The incomplete?"

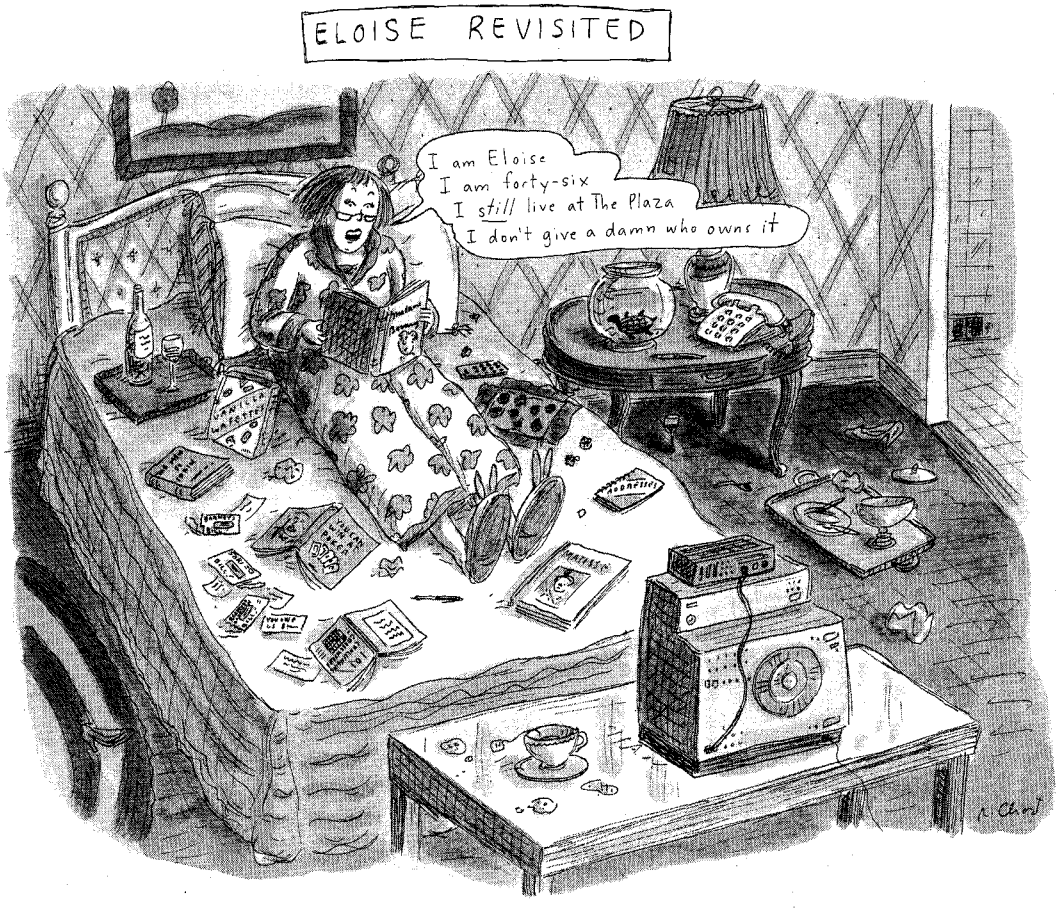
"In the sense that it has a yet-to-be-brought-into-being quality, yes," Bullock replied.

More than anything else about Bullock, this mystical streak surprised me. After all, the hallmark of the work of this octogenarian Oxford historian has been scholarly restraint and modesty, a scrupulous unwillingness to exceed the limits of the available evidence. In his published work Bullock is a scholar who eschews speculation. But in person Bullock is a veritable fount of speculation, ranging from his notion of Hitler's metaphysical incompleteness to rather earthy thoughts about Hitler's physical incompleteness. Or, as Bullock put it, the "one-ball business."

The "one-ball business" had come up in the context of a question I'd asked Bullock about the death, in 1931, of Hitler's young half niece, Geli Raubal. In his biography Bullock had stated his belief that Hitler "was in love" with Geli, that they'd shared a tormented relationship plagued by his jealousy and possessiveness. But Bullock does more than depict Hitler in love with Geli; he asserts that her still puzzling death—an apparent suicide, in her bedroom in Hitler's Munich apartment—was "a greater blow than any other event in his life" (a remarkable statement, considering what that life encompassed). Over a glass of wine in the common room of St. Catherine's College, I'd asked Bullock if he still believed that Geli's death was a moment of *transformation* for Hitler.

"Well, it seems so—I mean, the keeping of the room, the sentimentality," Bullock told me, referring to a Miss Havisham-like shrine to Geli which Hitler ever after maintained untouched in the room in which she died.

Bullock then turned to the nature of their relationship. "But what did he want her to *do*?" he asked. "What did Hitler want from Geli he couldn't get, or she couldn't give? Did he want her to marry him? Be his mistress? But could he perform? I mean, it was suggested actually, I understand he, sexually—" Bullock appeared somewhat uncomfortable with the subject. "I mean, you come back to the one-ball business."



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I asked him whether he believed the 1945 Soviet autopsy report that no left testicle had been found in Hitler's charred body.

"Oh, there's no question," Bullock replied.

In fact, certain questions raised by the Russian autopsy about Hitler's last moment of life have *not* been laid to rest—questions ranging from the one testicle that the Russians claim was missing from Hitler's genitals to the one bullet that passed through Hitler's head. A long-standing dispute between Bullock and Trevor-Roper over the circumstances of Hitler's suicide reflects once again their profound disagreement about Hitler's essential character.

Most authorities agree that on the afternoon of April 30, 1945, with Soviet troops advancing on the bunker, Hitler and Eva Braun entered their private suite with two revolvers and some cyanide capsules. Shortly thereafter, a single gunshot was heard, and Hitler's aides carried the two dead bodies to a bomb crater just outside the bunker, set them on fire, and then buried the charred remains in a shallow grave. A few days later, Soviet troops captured the bunker, dug up the remains, and called in pathologists. With the help of dental records, they identified Hitler's body and performed an autopsy. The results of the autopsy were kept secret by the Soviets until 1968. Before then, almost all historians agreed with the scenario that Trevor-Roper had pieced together from his interrogations and published in "The Last Days." According to that account, Eva Braun killed herself by crushing a cyanide capsule in her mouth, while Hitler chose a traditional German soldier's death—shooting himself in the head with his pistol. The crux of Trevor-Roper's view of Hitler's death is once again his unshakable faith in Hitler's sincerity. "Of Hitler at least it can be said that his emotions were genuine," he wrote in "The Last Days"—he died a soldier for the cause.

The Soviet-autopsy findings, which came to light in "The Death of Adolf Hitler," a 1968 book by the Russian journalist Lev Bezymensky, told another story. Soviet pathologists reported finding crushed glass shards of a cyanide capsule clenched in Hitler's badly burned jaw, and thus concluded that he had died from cyanide poisoning. Bezymensky argued, on the basis of the pathologists' report and a story attributed to Hitler's valet, Heinz Linge, who was just outside the death chamber, that Hitler died not a soldier's death but a coward's death. According to Bezymensky, Hitler, lacking the courage to pull the trigger on himself, bit down on a cyanide capsule: after his death, Linge entered the death suite and fired Hitler's pistol into his head to create the illusion that the Führer took the soldier's way out.



"Say yes. I need a win."

• •

But Trevor-Roper contends that the Soviet autopsy report shouldn't be taken at face value—that it was a political as well as a medical document, designed to diminish Hitler for history. Seen in that light, the Soviet report of Hitler's genital incompleteness could also have been concocted as a crude way of further derogating Hitler. The missing testicle thus becomes the objective correlative of the lack of manliness that the Soviets imputed to his style of suicide.

Until recently, Bullock has steadfastly adhered to the findings of the Soviet autopsy, in part because they validated his original conception of Hitler as a schemer up until his final moment—an actor even in his final act. But evidence in a new book, "The Death of Hitler," by Ada Petrova and Peter Watson, caused Bullock to alter his view. "What the book shows is that Linge's story is ruled out," Bullock now says. "This is what Trevor-Roper said from the beginning." Bullock now accepts Petrova and Watson's view that Hitler—almost simultaneously—bit down on a cyanide capsule and then fired a bullet through his head.

Bullock remains fascinated, however, not just with the conclusions of the Soviet autopsy but with the autopsied organs. He told me that he had revised the paperback of his 1991 dual biography, "Hitler and Stalin," to include an account of the bizarre odyssey of Hitler's organs, based on interviews with the Soviet soldiers who had disposed of Hitler's remains. "On Stalin's orders, Hitler's organs, which had been placed in jars during the autopsy, were removed to the Kremlin," Bullock wrote.

"Stalin had the organs sent to him in Moscow?" I asked Bullock.

"Yes, he had them sent," Bullock replied. "Ah, marvellous! But did he *eat* them is what I want to know!" he asked, grinning, as he conjured up a horrific primal communion between the two dictators. "I'm sure some psychiatrist is going to say, 'Yeah, he ate Hitler's ball.' I must say, his one and only ball. Just think of what they'll make of that one. Poor old Waite—he'd really go overboard on that one."

In "The Psychopathic God," Robert Waite built an elaborate castle of Freudian interpretative analysis on the slender foundation of Hitler's half-empty scrotal sac. Bullock doesn't buy the Freudian

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interpretation of the one-ball business. But in an important sense, the Hitler he gave the world was a significantly deflated figure.

Bullock's quest for the truth about Hitler began, he told me, in the midst of the Blitz. Before the war, he was primarily a historian of ancient wars—a student of the conflicts chronicled by Thucydides and Tacitus. But after the invasion of Poland, in 1939, he turned his attention to the present. "I spent the war in London building up the broadcasting to Europe"—the BBC service to Nazi-occupied nations—"so I was sensitized in a big way to the politics and history of Europe in that period," he said. "I think all historians who were drawn into the war, like Hugh Trevor-Roper and Hugh Seton-Watson, came back with the question: Why? How did this happen?"

Shortly after the war ended, Bullock travelled to Germany, and what he remembers is the silence. "I remember going to the Ruhr—this was the heart of Europe as far as industry was concerned—and there was silence everywhere. There wasn't a single smokestack. There were no cars, no trains. Long lines of foreign workers wending their way home. It was like a remote agricultural country, except for the ruins. I couldn't believe what had happened. I mean, civilization was destroyed. All of us, I think, came back wanting to know why."

What galvanized him to write a Hitler biography was the Nuremberg trials. "There were twenty-six volumes of verbatim testimony from the trials, and I reviewed every one of those," he said. "I became intensely excited about them. From the point of view of the historian, the Nuremberg trials were an absolutely unqualified wonder. I mean, the greatest coup in history for historians. They captured the records of the most powerful state in the world immediately after the event! So I became involved with the publication of those, and then out of the blue came an invitation to write the life of Hitler."

Bullock's massive biography was an instant success upon publication, a bestseller on both sides of the Atlantic. To date, "Hitler: A Study in Tyranny" has sold more than three million copies, and it remains in print in a 1962 revised edition. When first published, the book "struck a chord," Bullock told me, because it dramatically defied the popular conception of Hitler which had taken shape after the war—the demonic-madman Hitler that Trevor-Roper had been instrumental in creating. "I remember very much the reaction in the popular press," Bullock said. "That Hitler wasn't a madman. He was an extremely astute and able politician. I think that really did surprise people."

Bullock's was a decidedly contrarian view. As the terrible dimensions of the Holocaust carnage became more and more a fact of shared consciousness, the figure of Hitler had grown to mythic, horrific proportions. He had become something close to an apotheosis of evil. New words had been coined—"genocide," "Holocaust"—to describe his crimes, and the dimensions of his persona became inflated to match the dimensions of the slaughter. Against the backdrop of Trevor-Roper's messiah of irrationality, Bullock's Hitler was a deliberately diminished figure: a man of shrewdly rational—even petty—calculation; a human-scale schemer, not an all-powerful evil genius who burst the bounds of previous frameworks of explanation.

While Trevor-Roper had stressed how close Hitler came to winning the war, the recurring subtext of Bullock's "Study in Tyranny" is how close Hitler came to failing to reach power. His dramatic reconstruction of the high-stakes maneuvering for the Reich chancellorship, which brought Hitler to power in 1933, subverts the notion of some profound historical inevitability of Hitler by emphasizing the degree to which pure luck and shabby backstage scheming played a role in bringing him to office.

Bullock's "Study in Tyranny" is more than a biography; it's a heroic effort to fit Hitler into the more familiar framework of classical historical portraiture. Fittingly, Bullock affixes to the book an epigraph from Aristotle: "Men do not become tyrants in order to keep out the cold."

"Lovely remark," Bullock told me. "I'm a classics scholar, and Aristotle's 'Politics' is a wonderful book that I just thought had to be brought to bear. Men become tyrants because they wish to exercise power. It is not for material betterment or comfort but because they have an itch for power."



"For God's sake, Jen, he's old enough to be your waiter!"

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ZEA

Once their fruit is picked,
The cornstalks lighten, and though
Keeping to their strict

Rows, begin to be
The tall grasses that they are—
Lissom, now, and free

As canes that clatter
In island wind, or plumed reeds
Rocked by lake water.

Soon, if not cut down,
Their ranks grow whistling-dry, and
Blanch to lightest brown,

So that, one day, all
Their ribbonlike, down-arcing
Leaves rise up and fall

In tossed companies,
Like goose wings beating southward
Over the changed trees.

Later, there are days
Full of bare expectancy,
Downcast hues, and haze,

Days of an utter
Calm, in which one white corn-leaf,
Oddly aflutter,

Its fabric sheathing
A gaunt stem, can seem to be
The sole thing breathing.

—RICHARD WILBUR

"The love of power for its own sake?"

"That was my view of Hitler then. It's changed, you know."

It is rare for a scholar to concede such a dramatic shift in position. While there had been hints of a change in the 1962 edition of "Study in Tyranny," Bullock had never, as far as I knew, spelled out how profound a revision he'd embraced—nor had he ever mapped out the new model of Hitler's mind he'd developed to replace the original. The first intimation of the direction of that change had come when I mentioned to him the theologian Emil Fackenheim's take on the actor Hitler. I'd told Bullock about Fackenheim's belief that Hitler's hatred of the Jews was, like all his professed convictions, the charade of a cynical actor.

"Ah!" Bullock said. "He was the great actor *who believed in the part.* Absolutely. That's the unique thing about him. He's a great actor but he— There's a wonderful quotation from Nietzsche."

At this point, we were in his study at St. Catherine's, and he drew down from his bookshelf a volume of Nietzsche to read aloud some lines that expressed his own revised view of Hitler's psychology:

> Men believe in the truth of all that is seen to be strongly believed. In all great deceivers, a remarkable process is at work to which they owe their power. In the very act of deception with all its preparations—the dreadful voice, the expression, the gestures—they are overcome by their belief in themselves, and it is this belief which then speaks so persuasively, so miracle-like to the audience. Not only does he communicate that to the audience but the audience returns it to him and strengthens his belief.

The mental process of public figures that Nietzsche is describing here is complicated. It begins with what seems like a cynical calculation: that what is important is not to believe but *to be seen to believe*—that the counterfeiting of belief counts for more than the sincerity of belief. But if there is calculation initially, what follows is the "remarkable process" whereby the actor-deceiver becomes carried away, becomes a believer in his own deception—possessed by himself.

Think of the process beginning with a calculating Hitler—call it Bullock I—then proceeding to incorporate the spellbinding, sincere Hitler of Trevor-Roper, and, finally—through a meshing of thesis and antithesis—coming to a synthesis, the Hitler of Bullock II. The actor who comes to believe in his own act. The mesmerist who mesmerizes himself.

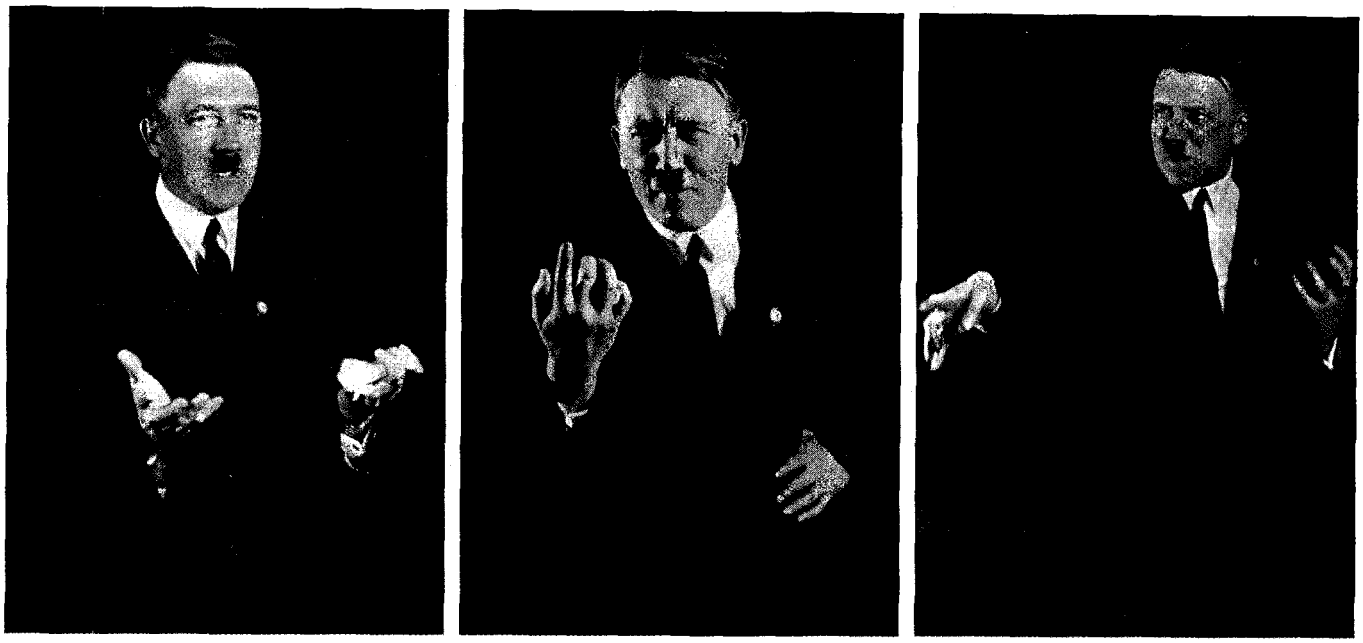
The key change in his thinking, Bullock told me, came as he reinterpreted the role of ideology in Hitler's thought world. "I changed my mind about Hitler, in that I originally took him as solely interested in power," Bullock explained. "I now think the ideology is central. I think it's what armors Hitler against remorse, guilt—anything. Hitler was unmovable on this ideology, this belief he was the man sent by Providence. The belief in himself. I think I have brought that out much more in the second book than I did in the first. In the first, I didn't grasp that." ("Alan admits that I changed his view," Trevor-Roper boasted last week. And Bullock acknowledges the influence on him of his rival's views.)

I was impressed by Bullock's humility, but wondered whether this more complicated and dynamic model of Hitler's thought process didn't contain a contradiction. "Can one be sincere and insincere at the same time?" I asked him.

Bullock trumped me with a visual metaphor and a story about a funeral. "It's like fast-moving water, isn't it?" he said.

Fast-moving water? I thought of light flickering off the peaks of rapidly moving waves. There was something intuitively convincing about the image, the flickering back and forth of calculation

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In 1927, Hitler had a series of photographs taken while he rehearsed gestures to a recording of one of his speeches.

and belief in the fast-moving stream of consciousness.

As for the funeral, it had taken place just that morning, Bullock said. A colleague had drowned in a swimming accident—in fast-moving water. Bullock had spoken at the service. "I experienced it this morning when I was speaking," he told me. "I was speaking with my whole heart, because I really was very distressed—the wife who had gone through this appalling experience was in front of me, looking at me. And at the same time I was saying to myself, 'Are they listening to me? Am I being a success?' I'm being frank with you. I don't think I'm an insincere man, but I'm perfectly aware of what I do, and I wanted to be a success."

Bullock's new synthesis of Hitler's thought process can sound abstract until he connects it to a momentous turning point in the war, in which Bullock finds the origins of Hitler's defeat. That turning point, Bullock believes, came after his first heady victories on the Russian front, in 1941. Bullock perceives Hitler to have been cautious and cunning before that—ready, for instance, to withdraw immediately if the French had shown any sign of military opposition to his reoccupation of the Rhineland in 1936.

"Up to that point in 1941, he's hesitant—and then he's ruthless," Bullock said, fusing the components of Bullock II. "But, once he gets the attack on Russia, then I think he thinks, you know, This is it."

According to Bullock, the astonishing success of Hitler's June, 1941, offensive, the victorious onslaught that brought his armies to the outskirts of Moscow, caused Hitler to become intoxicated with his own powers—so intoxicated that he lost the caution and cunning that had been essential ingredients of his political and military successes. "The man destroys himself," Bullock said. "Which is so interesting. I mean, making the German Army stand in front of Moscow and not retreat"—thus condemning the overextended troops to decimation by the cold and by the Soviet counter-offensives when a tactical retreat might have preserved Hitler's overwhelming strategic advantage. "If only he'd been flexible, it's quite conceivable Stalin could have made a compromise peace. That's one of the things that's a mystery. But the extraordinary thing about this—and this is where the element of hubris comes into it—is that it's when he gets to the point where he no longer manipulates his image but believes in it entirely, when he drops the manipulation, that he's destroyed. He was destroyed by his own image. As long as he believed and manipulated, he was successful, but when he gets outside Moscow he no longer manipulates. It's will and will alone afterward."

"He loses the pragmatism?"

"All of it. Look, the man could have had half of Russia on his side against Stalin. That's the moment he destroys himself. Oh, it's a very satisfactory Greek tragedy."

Can Hitler be explained by traditional concepts of evil, such as those found in classical tragedy? Or was Hitler an abhorrent anomaly—outside the continuum of ordinary human nature—as Emil Fackenheim believes?

Bullock flickers back and forth on these questions. Shortly after he made his remarks about Hitler's defeat being a vindication of classical Greek tragedy, he raised the issue of whether Hitler explodes the old framework.

I'd asked him if his lifelong study of Hitler had resulted in a change in his view of the potential of human nature for evil.

"A lot," he said. "I mean, if you're brought up as most of us are, we live in a very protective society and we're confronted by . . . I'll never forget coming out of Yad Vashem"—the Holocaust museum in Jerusalem. "I was shattered. Shattered."

"Does it require that we reconsider what the essence of human nature is?" I asked him. "Does there come a point, a critical mass, where quantity of killing matters?"

"I think there's an extra thing that comes into it when you mechanize it," Bullock said. "Then it's suddenly the accountants working on the cost-benefit of this and that method of killing. This is the horror of the German Holocaust. It isn't done in hot-blooded fury of battle or revenge. It's cold-blooded. The Jews

COURTESY OF KARL STEHLE: UPI/BETTMANN; POPPERFOTO; CULVER PICTURES

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Some theorists have traced the source of Hitler's transformation—and charisma—to hypnotic suggestion.

COURTESY OF KARL STEHLE. UPI/BETTMANN; UPI/BETTMANN; POPPERFOTO

were not a military threat. When the Russians committed atrocities—by God, they had provocation. That *was* revenge. This wasn't revenge. This was cold-bloodedness."

So for Bullock, the state of mind behind the killing is a key factor in defining the degree of evil—but not the only factor. He returned to the question of scale.

"It's a difficult one, isn't it? Scale—I'm afraid I think it does matter, but I resist that conclusion. I mean, I feel it's somehow or other morally flawed, that judgment. And yet I do think if you see a million people killed, somehow or other it's worse than if ten are killed."

It was at this point in our conversation that Bullock's mystical streak emerged. We'd left his study to walk from St. Catherine's to the Ashmolean Museum, where Bullock had a trustees' meeting. He'd been discussing the difficulty of defining Hitler's evil in conventional terms. "I must say, I think the mystics have something to say on the question," Bullock told me as he set a vigorous pace across the bridge over the river Isis. Shortly thereafter, he delivered himself of that remarkable statement about evil as incompleteness.

His voice rose. "The paradox of Jesus embracing Judas!" he exclaimed. "That's fascinating. You read it, your hair stands on end! He kissed him on the lips!"

It took me some time to figure out the relationship between Bullock's vision of evil as incompleteness, Jesus' embrace of Judas (in a probably apocryphal version of the story), and Bullock's conception of Hitler. But there is a unity there.

Consider evil as incompleteness: evil conceived not as an alien, inhuman otherness but as a less highly evolved form of humanness—lower, far lower on the great chain of being but still part of the same continuum of creation that gave birth to us. Thus Judas, the most conspicuously evil figure in the New Testament, can be embraced as a part of creation, albeit the most incomplete part.

Bullock finds in the mystics' love of paradox a validation for his own paradoxical vision of Hitler's thought world—simultaneously sincere and insincere. "Extraordinary," Bullock tells me. "Tao, Sufi, Zen Buddhism, Catholic, Protestant, Blake, Plato, Plotinus—although they're so different, they all loved paradox. That which is and that which is not; that which is wholly united and that which is wholly divided."

It was Bullock's father, Frank, who inspired his interest in the mystical path, and he speaks movingly of his father's unorthodox spiritual quest. "A Unitarian minister, he came to feel after the war that religion was dying and that there were so many people on a sort of spiritual hunt he couldn't reach," Bullock recalled. "So, although he continued to preach—and a marvellous preacher he was—he did revive an old tradition, an alternative ministry. He completely severed himself from the church side of things, took a room that had no resemblance to a chapel. There was no ritual, no prayers. And he called his preaching psychology lectures. And he went on for twenty or thirty years. And there he brought home many of his religious beliefs, stated them in some nonreligious terms. A lot of people came to listen to him. Totally without recognition, because this was a town in the north that no one had heard of—Bradford. And he said, 'Well, my luck is to talk to forty or fifty people.' And he never complained. I think that in the nineteenth century he would have been a great preacher. And in the late twentieth century he'd be on television. And—well, he was a lovely man, he really was."

Could it be that on some level Bullock was juxtaposing his modest, unsung preacher father with the shameless and malevolent German street preacher he has spent his life chronicling? Bullock's revised vision of Hitler's thought world seemed to be yet another instance of the interrelationship of explainer and explanation. In his new thesis, Bullock was incorporating two sides of himself, two generations of Bullocks—his own orthodox, classically trained mind-set and his father's unorthodox, mystical perspective.

As we approached the pillars of the Ashmolean, toward the end of our conversation, Bullock returned to an even more challenging aspect of incomplete-

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ness—the controversial notion of an incomplete God, a God not sufficiently omnipotent to prevent Hitler's crimes.

"Some days, I ask God," Bullock told me, his voice dropping to an impassioned whisper, "'If You were there, why didn't You stop it?' And then he added the sad lesson of a lifetime spent attempting to explain Hitler: "Never believe God is omnipotent."

It was a thesis I was to hear posed in even more dramatic terms from a surprising source in Jerusalem—Yehuda Bauer, a Professor of Holocaust Studies at Hebrew University who is widely regarded as one of the foremost scholars of the Holocaust. Bauer had been talking about the tortured attempts by some theologians to explain Hitler and the Holocaust as "part of God's plan."

It's a problem Fackenheim has wrestled with—one that has led him to redefine but reaffirm his belief in God. But Bauer believes, in the harsh light of the Holocaust, that "there's no way there can be an all-powerful and a just God. If He is all-powerful"—and He did not stop the killing—"He is Satan. If He is just"—but did not have the power to stop the killing—"He is a nebbish. I don't need a God like that."

Even for a professed atheist like Bauer, the attempt to explain Hitler entails an attempt to explain God. But what about the attempt to explain Hitler? I thought that Bauer, if anyone, would be in a position to answer the question: Will there ever be a why?

Bauer told me he believes that it is theoretically possible. "But the fact that something is explicable doesn't say we have explained it," he said.

Bauer is saying that there *is* a why, but it may be too late to find it. There are too many long-dead eyewitnesses, too many gaps in the documentary record, too many gaps in the record of memory. But that doesn't mean Hitler is outside human nature. The Holocaust opened up "new horizons . . . regarding the possibilities, or the capabilities of humans," including capabilities for evil "that were never suspected before," Bauer has written. The reality of these capabilities suggests to Bauer that "such actions are likely or possible by others too."

We may despair of ever explaining Hitler. But we cannot abandon the attempt, because of those "others"—the other Hitlers who may be among us even now. ♦

LETTER FROM BERCHTESGADEN

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Days after the Nazi defeat, the author filed a report for this magazine from Hitler's ransacked Alpine compound. Half a century later, he returns.

BY PHILIP HAMBURGER

MAY, 1945. The war in Europe was over at last, and the thousand-year Reich lay in ruins. As a correspondent for this magazine, I travelled to Berchtesgaden, high in the Bavarian Alps; poked through the rubble of Hitler's house, the Berghof; and scrambled up the steep peak of the Kehlstein to the Kehlsteinhaus, best known as the Eagle's Nest. Of the Eagle's Nest I wrote at the time, "It reveals Hitler's madness and his exquisite bad taste. Taking Nietzsche's words literally—Superman lives on the mountaintop—the master of Europe went into the clouds. And what did he build? From the outside, the place could be the guardhouse of a state penitentiary. Inside, everything is out of proportion or off key." I promised myself to return someday and take another look.



ANDREA VENTURA

Some fifty years later, I'm in Munich, en route to Berchtesgaden—to keep my promise. A bellhop opens the door of my hotel room and switches on CNN. Global village! I wander around the city, now tastefully rebuilt, along nineteenth-century lines, after being almost totally levelled during the war. Predominant color: tan. The striking absence of high-rises lends the city a sense of cohesion; blue tramcars hitched together make a small-town creaking sound going around corners. Large areas of the city center have been turned into pedestrian zones, and they're swarming with people. Occasionally, you see bands of youths—longhairs, not skinheads—plowing through the streets with arms joined and loudly singing athletic songs. Nobody seems quite sure what they represent. A young, idealistic German friend told me that these unpleasant-looking kids had no focus, no central political drive. Others are skeptical of this interpretation. One thing that's certain is that the majority of the males you see walking the streets have protuberant bellies. If Germany were a theocracy, breweries would be the holy places.

Munich custom decrees that *Weisswurst*—a pale sausage of veal and bacon mixed with lemon and parsley—must be eaten before noon. Eating *Weisswurst* at, say, 12:01 P.M. brings dire consequences. So I head for a celebrated *Weisswurst* outfit, the Franziskaner, on Peruastrasse, near the Opera, and arrive at 11:59 A.M. The proprietor gives me a dark look, consults with a waitress, and finally grants permission for me to be served *Weisswurst*. The taste is fragile and delicious. I walk into the nearby Odeonsplatz, a vast square dominated by an open loggia known as the Feldhernhalle (Hall of the Commanders), which has statues of Bavarian warriors of the past and a memorial to those who fell in the Franco-Prussian War. Two surly sculptured lions sit at the top of the loggia

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steps, quite unlike the benign lions in front of the New York Public Library. These two harbor a grudge. The square is almost empty, except for a lone violinist in tattered clothes scratching away at the top of the steps.

I suddenly recall a photograph, dated August 2, 1914, that shows an enormous crowd in front of this loggia, whooping it up for Germany's entrance into the First World War, which had just begun. An unnamed photographer had taken a photograph of Adolf Hitler standing there in the crowd, listening attentively and with obvious pleasure to the speaker. Hitler is next to an anonymous gentleman wearing an elegant panama hat, and in the background is a storefront office of the old Hamburg-Amerika line. In this same square, on November 9, 1923, Hitler's armed putsch against the Weimar Republic faltered. The previous evening, he had burst into a gathering in a nearby beer hall and announced the formation of a new government. After a night of incendiary speeches, he and a group of Nazis, accompanied by General Erich von Ludendorff, headed along the narrow streets leading into the Odeonsplatz. Armed police tried unsuccessfully to block their passage. Then, just as Hitler's group was about to set foot in the Odeonsplatz, they met a second group of police officers, and someone fired a shot.

To this day, nobody knows who fired that shot. Hell broke loose. The melee lasted less than a minute, but left seventeen dead—fourteen National Socialists and three policemen—and more than a hundred wounded. Hitler himself fell to the ground, with a dislocated shoulder. He was whisked away to the home of a friend, the art-book publisher Ernst Hanfstaengl, in the suburb of Uffing. He became hysterical and, a pistol in his hand, cried, "Now all is lost—no use going on!" Frau Hanfstaengl managed to take the pistol away and hide it in a barrel of flour. When officials came to arrest him, he put an overcoat on over his pajamas and pinned his Iron Cross to it. Hitler had vowed that he would emerge from the putsch either dead or in power. Neither happened—not then. He was sentenced to five years in jail, and was on his way.

The Odeonsplatz had left a bad taste in my mouth, and, feeling the need for a change of scene, I headed for the Lenbachhaus, which was once the home of the nineteenth-century painter Franz von Lenbach and is now a charming and exciting municipal art gallery. The collection includes paintings by Kandinsky, Marc, Klee, and others—paintings of the kind that infuriated Hitler to the point where he banned them. I stayed quite some time, expunging the memory of those ugly lions at the Feldherrnhalle.

BERCHTESGADEN. The bellhop opened the door of my hotel room and turned on CNN. Global village again. I walked to the window and was staggered by the jagged, snowcapped Bavarian Alps. Their beauty is of a magnitude touching the threshold of pain. I turned away for an instant, then turned back, and the mountains were gone, swallowed in clouds. Another blink, and the mountains were there, casting a spell. I told myself that in surroundings of such wild, unpredictable pagan beauty anything could happen. Anything.

At lunch, a waiter wearing Bavarian shorts recommended a platter of cold cuts and assorted cheeses. He pointed to the immense peak I had seen from the window and said, with great solemnity, "That is the mighty Watzmann, the second-highest peak in Germany—two thousand seven hundred and thirteen metres, eight thousand nine hundred and one feet. There are many dark legends about the Watzmann. Watzmann was a great nobleman but had a deeply cruel nature. There were seven children and a long-suffering wife. This Watzmann was so cruel that he was turned to stone. Now, that smaller peak to the left of Watzmann, and the smaller ones in between—they represent Frau Watzmann and the children. The entire family was so outright vicious, including the little ones, that one day when they were hunting in the woods God himself decided to punish them: he whipped up a dreadful, fierce storm, buried all these evil ones. But the Watzmanns, even with their nastiness, possessed a certain amount of blue blood. Hence the bright-blue water of our nearby gemlike lake, the Königssee. No accounting for legends."

The next day, severe Alpine weather postponed my trip to the Eagle's Nest, so I wandered around Berchtesgaden. Majestic mountains aside, the town is somewhat drab. You would never guess that at one point in history notables arrived here, ascended the Kehlstein, and determined the fate of Europe. No pictures of Hitler. In a bank, where I exchanged dollars for Deutsche marks, a clerk said someone had told him that Hitler's half sister was buried in a nearby graveyard. There were many souvenir shops selling picture postcards, Alpine weathervanes, running shoes. Lots of drugstores. Bookstores featured biographies of Hillary Rodham Clinton and Marlene Dietrich.

The town had the gemütlich feeling of an old folks' home. I saw a crowd of mostly elderly people gathered in a large open space to hear an oompah band play familiar tunes. The men and women all had faraway smiles on their faces, suggesting that the world could be made right if only people would gather at noon to listen to oompah music. I struck up a couple of conversations around town, and, no matter how innocuously they began, they always seemed to end on serious matters: "I don't miss my father because I never knew him. He died at Stalingrad"; "My great-grandfather owned property on the mountain where Hitler had his house. First, Hitler rented a place called Haus Wachenfeld. He later bought it, and expanded and renovated it, and renamed it the Berghof. Brown shirts irritated my ancestor—irritated him so much that he said there was too much brown around, more brown than in the earth itself. Someone passed the remark along, and my ancestor was arrested. He was a mountain man and was exiled to flat country."

At dusk, the bad weather cleared sufficiently so that I could join a friend for a boat ride on the Königssee. There were young and old on board, many in Bavarian shorts. A crew member, acting as announcer, made it clear that any journey on the Königssee was an extremely solemn matter, with mystical, almost holy overtones. He spoke of the lake's crystal-clear waters, of the special trout and salmon that swam there, of the small, orange-domed Church of St. Bartholomä, far down the lake, and beyond it the hunting lodge where Bavarian kings once slept. Suddenly, the boat stopped. Darkness had fallen. "Now," said the announcer, "the Echo." He put a flugelhorn to his lips and blew a long, haunting note. A moment later, from somewhere in the surrounding mountains came an echo of the horn. Not once, not twice, but seven times the

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echo broke the silence of night. The passengers gasped. I found myself slightly disturbed by the whole idea of echoes.

THE next day was cloudless, with the towering mountains crisply delineated against a bright-blue sky. A perfect day for the Eagle's Nest. I took a taxi as far as a parking area halfway up the mountain, and bought a ticket there for a bus that goes to the top. I also bought some illustrated paperbacks purporting to explain the building of the mountain road and of the Eagle's Nest itself. The man in the shop said to me, furtively, "One of these books portrays a different outlook." I repeated this remark later to a friend, a heroic anti-Nazi, and she said, "That was the proprietor's way of telling you to be skeptical of the text, which may be slanted toward Hitler."

Like the townspeople, the crowd on the bus was mostly elderly. The driver was a martinet. He examined each ticket as though he were a border guard determined to catch illegal immigrants. He made a special point of examining the time of departure stamped on each ticket, then grunted and handed the ticket back. A canned lecture in both German and English played on a loudspeaker during part of the trip: "This beautiful mountain road is an engineering marvel. We travel to more than five thousand feet above sea level, and reach a tunnel leading to the elevator. The Eagle's Nest is six thousand and seventeen feet high." Always climbing and making hairpin turns, the bus came upon dizzying vistas everywhere. The announcer ran on about the spectacular scenery and fabulous ski runs. I let my mind wander.

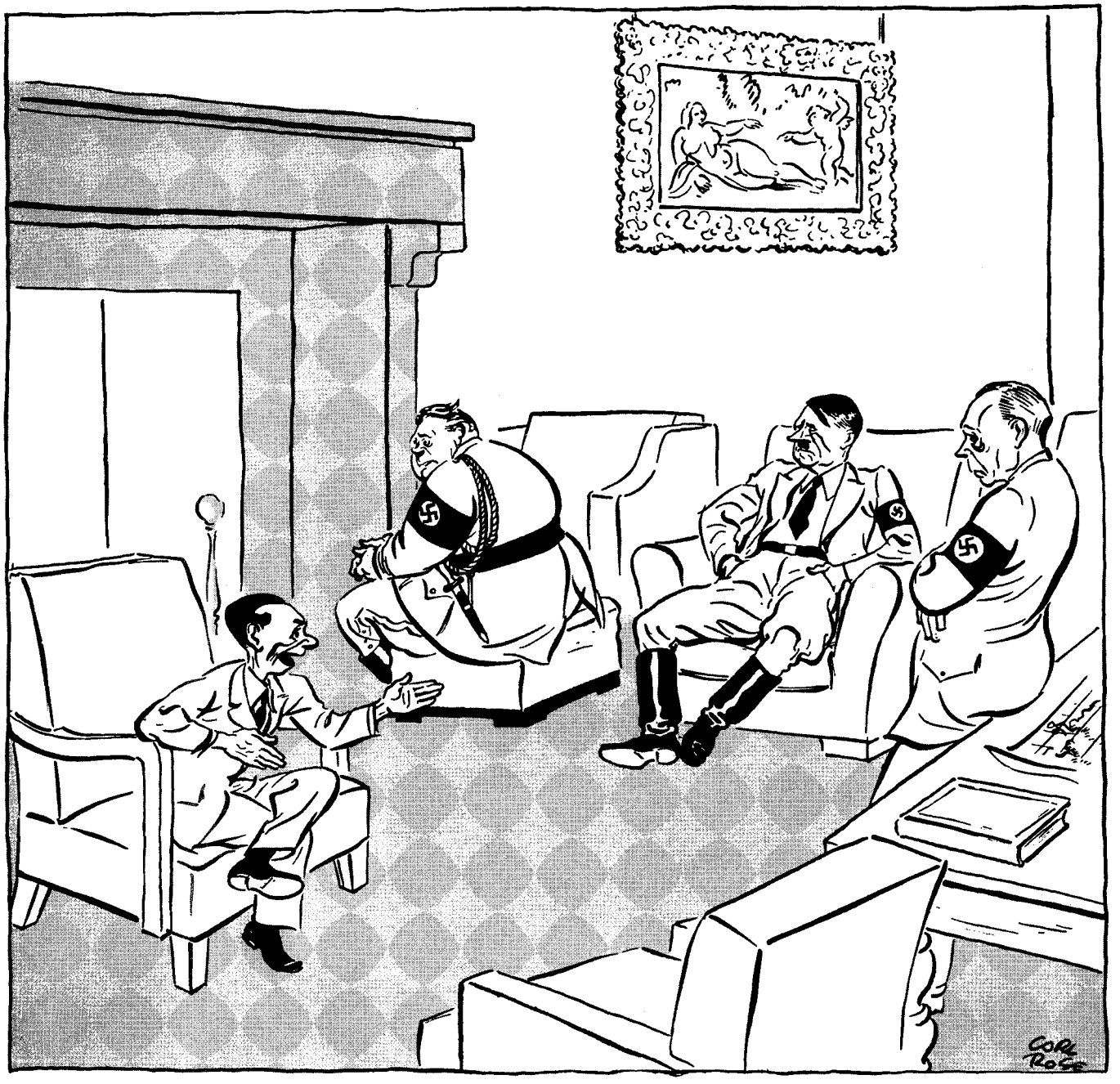
May, 1945. I'm in the Berghof, Hitler's own house, below the unbombed Eagle's Nest and surrounded by destroyed buildings that once formed the military compound and residences. The Berghof is an outsized white chalet-type building with a large picture window, so often depicted in photographs of Hitler and visiting nabobs. Now it's a scene of almost total desolation. Amid the rubble on the living-room floor I spot Hermann Göring's engraved calling card. I scoop it up and bring it home to Harold Ross, then the editor of this magazine. He would later frame it and hang it on his office wall, and it would remain there until he died, six years later.

Meanwhile, the loudspeaker voice had become stern, saying that discipline and precision were required to guarantee a safe trip back down the mountain. It was extremely important that passengers arrive at the bus stop below the Eagle's Nest in time for the bus leaving at the hour stamped on their card. No leeway, no give—the implication being that malingerers would be left to freeze to death on the mountain. The bus stopped at a broad parking space carved out of the mountain, in front of a tunnel leading to an elevator.

Again, May of 1945. When I arrived at this spot with my friend and fellow-correspondent Dorothy Thompson, the elevator was still mined, and out of commission. To reach the Eagle's Nest, we had to climb some four hundred feet up a steep snow-patched pathway. Although Thompson had come close to death earlier that day in an auto accident, she gamely persevered up the Kehlstein. It was a highly emotional moment for her: she had been among the first and most vocal of the American correspondents to alert the world to the poison of Hitler.

All hands now trooped about four hundred feet through the tunnel, which was dimly lit and had sweating stone walls. As the crowd approached the elevator, it became noisier, more excited. Outside the elevator doors stood a large cardboard cutout of a jolly, obese man in Bavarian shorts wearing a silly grin and holding aloft a large turkey. It was an advertisement for a restaurant at the top, announcing that we had arrived at "a charming spot for something to eat" and explaining that turkey with cream sauce was available for eighteen Deutsche marks (about thirteen dollars). The elevator doors opened, and, as we rode up, the operator stated that the mirrors and bright brass fittings in the cab had been installed to alleviate Hitler's "well known" claustrophobia and fear of heights. The elevator ride lasted forty-five seconds. Strangely, the crowd was now nearly out of control: there was loud laughter, shrieks, people poking each other. I couldn't figure out the reason for this transformation from the lumpen bunch that had sat so quietly during the bus ride. The elevator opened onto the Eagle's Nest itself. Built for Hitler's fiftieth birthday, and intended as a place for receptions and conferences, it was now a restaurant, bustling and filled to capacity—a typical beer-hall scene, with many small, odd-shaped rooms, low ceilings, crowded tables, waiters scurrying back and forth skillfully balancing trays that held steins of beer. Outside, the terraces were jam-packed. In every direction, the vistas, once again, were too beautiful for rational thought. I felt that I was on the threshold of the same pain I had experienced in my hotel room. People were wandering in and out of the building, paying special attention to a vast marble fireplace in what had been the main conference room. There was no fire, but the logs in the fireplace were charred. I walked along the sun terrace, where Hitler is said to have sat alone, brooding. I found a small, relatively quiet dining area, and while I ate I glanced at the books I'd bought on the way up. There were photographs of Eva Braun and her sister happily sunning themselves on the parapet, and a photograph of Hitler glancing down admiringly at the overwhelming scenery. I walked outside again, past more beer drinkers on another, larger terrace, toward a big wooden cross at the top of a steep incline leading from the Eagle's Nest to what seemed like the sky itself. Except along the steepest portion of the trail, there was no handrail, and I had a dizzy sensation that the entire world lay below. The villages in the valleys seemed mere toys. I spotted the blue gash of the Königssee, where I'd heard those echoes the night before. The evil Watzmann was now almost too close for comfort. I spotted a telephone handset on a pole, and as I walked toward it a young woman shouted, "Don't use! It has a spider!" I saw no spider, so I deposited a mark and listened to a banal recorded tourist spiel describing the monumental scenery. Then I hung up and trudged higher. Swift-moving black clouds were forming near Watzmann. I stopped in front of a bright-orange sign that said, "Danger of Death. If Is Approaching a Thunderstorm Please Return Immediately to the House." The sign apparently meant business. It also carried the German and French words *Lebensgefahr* and *Danger de Mort*. The black clouds were growing thicker but still seemed far away. I climbed a few more minutes, reached the cross, and opened a small wooden box at its foot. A notice inside the box read "Zum Gedenken" ("To Remember"), but the box was otherwise

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"... and as for those postwar trials, we can always plead insanity."

FROM THE NEW YORKER, AUGUST 14, 1943

• •

empty, except for a handwritten note saying, "Mom and Dad: I love you. Please take good care of yourselves and have a great time."

I have heard all my life about the suddenness and the severity of Alpine storms, but I was astounded by the speed of the one now approaching, and I beat a hasty retreat down to the parking lot. The heavens opened up. Drenching rain in thick sheets. Wild winds, lightning, thunder—the works. Finally, the bus arrived, and, soaked to the skin, I climbed aboard and descended the mountaintop.

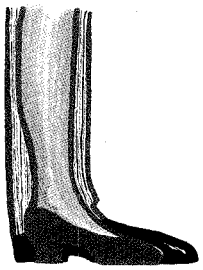
Still dripping wet, I returned to my hotel room, and while I was drying out—mentally, physically—I turned on the television. No CNN this time but, instead, a program of familiar entertainers. I sat transfixed as Groucho, in the famous scene in the overcrowded steamer cabin ("A Night at the Opera"), opens the bottom drawer of a trunk to find, asleep inside, the angelic Harpo. Then Fred Astaire flew gracefully across the screen. My cup runneth over: W. C. Fields as Micawber, discussing personal finances; Judy Garland; Bing Crosby. And the songs of one's youth: "I could write a sonnet about your Easter bonnet"; "Oh, lady be good"; "Taking a chance on love"; "Ol' Man River." When Jimmy Durante showed up leading an elephant, and someone said to him "Where are you going with that elephant?" and Jimmy said "What elephant?" I knew it was time to go home. ♦

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FICTION

THE TARGET AUDIENCE

BY ROBERT BINGHAM



A GUARDIA in the hot center of a New York City summer is something I'm secretly terrified of, and outside the terminal two helicopters crossed over the airport hotels. They went *cut*, *cut*, *cut*. I missed the four-thirty Delta shuttle by two minutes. Trump, Delta, the corporate obituary of the once reliable Eastern shuttle, the bankruptcies and timetable changeovers: all of it mangled my mind, and as I sat down in the Marine Terminal there was only one word for it: obscene.

The law is a service industry that never stops, and in this weather I've got to watch myself so that something terrible doesn't happen to me. I was wearing a light-blue suit with shoulder padding I despised, a white shirt, and a tasteful tie. I'm a pretty competent lawyer when I can concentrate, but it's no trade secret that I prefer doing my legal work in New York. "Let the client change in Pittsburgh" is my motto. Handhold them right into the conference room, where our climate control is superb.

The vaulted stone dome of the Marine Terminal marginally calmed me, but at the same time that malicious bastard I can be flowered in my heart. I wasn't going to give Trump the business at five. My meeting wasn't until the next day, so all this mental harassment the shuttle had provided was in fact immaterial.

I chased a Xanax down with a beer at the concession stand. It didn't take long, and it rarely does with me; my fleeting anxiety slid into a warm, municipal beneficence. The lemonish indoor light filtered down on the handful of waiting passengers, and the air was redolent of pending margin calls and the promise of a corporate restructuring. I'm in debt, too. My father picked up my college tuition, but in law school I was on my own. Bankruptcy law has its pathos, and when it passed my way during my first-year rotation at the firm, I came close to practicing it permanently.

Anyway, two and a half years out, and I'm still in the hole, and I'm not speaking of the wife and kid, because I have neither. I do own stock in a small-cap maternity-clothing line called Mothers Work, Inc., which has performed quite well over the years. Real estate is what hurt me. I took a mortgage out on a condominium near the West Side Highway at the wrong time, and then there are the maintenance payments, which make you wonder why you ever bought in the first place. Still, I live pretty well in the Caravelle. For instance, the building, with the help of the board—I became a member when they needed a notary—has organized its own shuttle-van service, which runs the long avenue blocks, eastward, to the 1 and 9 subway line. I'm a regular. The papers are folded on the plush seats, and another regular rider is a woman with Bear, Stearns whom I've developed a masturbatory attraction for. She's nice and plump, and, when I'm going through a dry spell, I have her down on her hands and knees in my mind. The problem is, we have one rule on the van—no talking. It's been two years now, and Miss Bear, Stearns and I haven't even made eye contact.

I read an article on closed-end mutual-fund performances in *Money* magazine and made a call to the secretary I share with two other associates. There were no messages. I read over a prospectus, but after a while I began to daydream and people-watch. The black company cars and yellow cabs pulled into that comfy little cul-de-sac near the swinging terminal door, offering up the five-thirty Delta-shuttle passengers—dazed yet earnest, purposefully relaxed, real pros. I sat there taking in the uneven stream of the white-collar world, the women in linens, the men a picture of distracted formality. And you never know when a seismic coincidence may hit your number: I thought there was something familiar in the way she shook her hair as she got out of the cab. Familiar, yes, the handbag—and, well, if it wasn't Vivian Tate, the girl I shot in the leg at boarding school.

What a makeover. The colorized copper hair, that amazing nose, the eyes that even from a distance seemed to have visibly narrowed since her youth. The killer body. (I could just picture that sculpted butt, forged, no doubt, in endless repetitions of that hind-leg kicking motion in aerobics class.) A few weeks back I had heard she was at Silverman, Bahr, and now it was as if that tidbit, offered one morning by a colleague well versed in the problems of my high-school career—after I'd gone for years without hearing anything about Vivian—had jump-started the event unfolding before my eyes.

Historically, Silverman has never been a client of ours, but recently Bangs, Barlowe & Crumb dropped the ball on an important matter for them, and as a result, I'd heard, they'd been bringing some of their securities work to us. The news disturbed me, because the thought of representing Vivian in an initial public offering was frankly too much for me. As she began her migration across the rotunda—it was a perfect tracking shot from where I sat—I considered the statute of limitations on a crime that had been carried out at the height of my adolescence. I shot her in the leg with a pellet gun during my sixth-form year, and though I only meant to sting her, it happened that a piece of reinforcement metal had to be surgically clamped to her tibia. This shooting was not a matter I delved into when I passed the Bar, and there were never any official charges levelled against me.

Now she was only a few yards from my chair, and her sharpened profile had that latent air of feminine hostility, the look of a businesswoman on the rag and on the move. But there was something more there than the usual fend-offishness. She was on a mission, and

FILIP PAGOWSKI

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she wasn't going to Boston, either. She was on a dirty errand to Washington and, come to think of it, so was I.

I was helping a group of offshoots from the Corcoran Gallery set up a 501 (C)(3) nonprofit corporation. The Corcoran is something of a social client for the firm. In fact, I don't know why they use us at all, since there are plenty of Washington offices to choose from, but apparently it has something to do with J. Carter Brown, the Democratic Party, and a future seat on the Brookings Institution for a senior partner readying himself to be sent out to pasture. What do our practically pro-bono billing hours for the Corcoran have to do with the Brookings? I have no idea. That's all up there in partner land. The point is I'm beginning a new life, trying to get it together and not be such a criminal in the minds of others. In fact, the notion of me as an attorney is confusing to many of my old high-school friends. In one department—the achievement-in-the-real-world department—I am a barometer of reform, and I like to see how it confuses my friends from the old days. They're not sure if it's the world that's changed or me.

I tailed Vivian into the ticket-sales area. She was wearing a pewter-colored skirt with a gold lining peeking out at the hem, which shimmied up and down her mid-thigh as she moved, a white blouse under a tailored black jacket, and pearls, gold earrings, and one of those bracelets as thick as a cobra with a rat in its stomach. When she stopped short at an automated ticketing machine, I joined her, and I'm embarrassed to say the chorus from a Hall and Oates song—"Whoa, here she comes" (it's called "Maneater")—raced through my mind as the two of us stood there operating our machines in nearly simultaneous computer palpitations, her gold American Express card inserted parallel to my green, our fingertips walking the walk, she a step ahead with the Delta Airlines screen shedding its electric-blue light on our faces. A late payment on my American Express bill came to mind, and for a moment I was stabbed by a sense of financial impotence; I was on the cliff's edge staring down at credit-card defeat. But the joyous clicking sound of credit approval followed, and the ticket spouted into my hand.

Vivian was at least six steps in front of me, headed for the security check. Apparently, I had no effect whatsoever on her peripheral vision, or perhaps her peripheral vision was not highly advanced, but more likely than not she had become a good blanket judge of character, and had sensed beside her just another burned-out attorney carrying that telltale briefcase around like a ball and chain. Women of her calibre have so much to keep at bay—and I'm thirty-one now and much fatter than I was in boarding school. My cheeks have ballooned out from booze, and my maid complains about excavating my shower drain because of the continual hair loss.

But I had forgotten what a sexy, clubby affair the shuttle is. I was always amused by the chic nonchalance of the men and women one-hipping their ticket-line stance, the mild players in the mutual-fund world, the lawyers like me, all of us half-expecting a celebrity-C.E.O. spotting. We were ignoring one another as usual and migrating uphill toward the free newspapers and magazines—for we are, after all, the target audience. Approaching the security check, Vivian heaved that bale of hair over her shoulder in a kind of progress-achieved gesture that I appreciated. She had the trademark insolence—the bitchy, assumed equestrian grace—mixed in with the flashy hustle of Wall Street liquidity. But I didn't care. She was a corporate jewel, my victim, and as I tracked her every move a compounded sense of disoriented wonder filled my life.

WHY had I shot Vivian Tate? The haughtiness we all put on back then? Well, the world has rubbed it off our faces by now, I hope. But Vivian was one of the shining turncoats—that select group of control addicts who accepted positions on the Discipline Committee to cash in on faculty insinuations that they would receive high recommendations for college. Members of this select group were known as "narcs," and would actually sit *with* the faculty, in the *same* row of desks, and vote you out of a high-school career. Vivian was also a chapel-attendance bean counter, who paced the side aisles of the church, checking form lists like a reverent meter maid. Add that to her hand in the expulsion of two close friends of mine during our fifth-form year, and basically you could say the acrimony between us, by the spring of our final semester, had ratcheted itself up into a glorious boarding-school red zone. The problem was she was arguably the best-looking girl in the school.

I was two men behind her when she set off the metal detector. Vivian whisked off her clip-on earrings and her bracelet, backed up, and walked through again. The metal detector sounded, and, lightly stomping her foot, for this was not progress achieved, my victim said, "I have this tiny piece of metal in my leg. It's so maddening, because it's just enough to set these things off."

There was a pregnant silence: the impatience of the pack. A man behind me coughed and blew his nose, and I could hear newspapers being ruffled to jump pages in the background.

"Isn't there someone with one of those thingies, those . . ."

But a security guard with a hand-held metal detector was already on the scene, and I fingered my penis in my pocket, standing the thing upright as I watched her lift her arms, hostage-like, for this shakedown—a form of suffering I could, in a sense, be held responsible for because of my actions so many years ago.

I can still feel the serrated plastic handle of that pump gun as I stuck it out the window of my second-story dormitory room. My friend Charley and a crazy exchange student from Venezuela and some others, the usual black-lung crowd, were loading up the six-shooter bong that rotated little hit-bowls—one, two, three, four, five, round and round we went in rapid THC fire, cranking "Love You Live" and hurling insults at one another. We were about to graduate, and I guess in the zeal of my loathing for the Harvard-bound Vivian Tate I pumped that gun up a few too many times. The sun magnified through the scope blessed the school's emerald lawns as I scanned them for a target, and when she came around a corner into my sights, it was a hateful marriage. . . . *Puhhf.* She crumpled to the ground outside the fives court without a word.

Assault with a deadly weapon, assault with intent to injure. The head-

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master was given two weeks to expel the perpetrator or the local police department would have no alternative but to conduct its own investigation. It was a witch-hunt of the first order, and since many of the younger faculty members were in fact dressed-up agents of the peace generation, it touched off a lot of soul-searching that was so sickening I just don't want to get into it now.

I didn't last long (and neither did Charley, who was later thrown out for lying in my behalf). One afternoon, I called my dad in tears. We loaded up the station wagon in the middle of the night, and I left that school forever. I did a post-grad year at an all-boys school in New Jersey that I'm still trying to forget, and now here I am, sitting next to my victim on the five-thirty Delta shuttle. We're drinking.

"I was just telling my ex about you on the phone the other night," she said. "He's still a caller, you know what I mean? I said to him, 'Carl, for Christ's sake, I thought you would understand what a restraining order entails.' "

In the half-pasteurized air of the boarding lounge, where the mouth of the plane came into view, I had tapped her shoulder. Outside, sheets of jet fuel reflected the comings and goings of the hybrid airport vehicles.

"Christ, it's you," she said. "Alex."

"Uh-huh."

I was watching the baggage riding up the loading ramp, and as she turned to face me, her familiar features triggered a fearful lust in my chest.

Now, snug near the back of the plane, she stole drinks. The first one was complimentary. Then she pilfered from the cart. That sent me; so wonderfully juvenile, the way she pulled those tiny airplane bottles from her oversized handbag on the way back from the bathroom.

"May I see it?" I said.

"Yes, you may," she replied, wearily hitching up her skirt as if she were displaying a tattoo.

"You actually left something in me, which is more than I can say for most men."

Outside the plane, the early evening sun was an orange disk above a bank of white clouds. Vivian's Bloody Mary was nice and sloppy. She didn't stir it, just let a pond of vodka float on blood, and when she hiked up her skirt for me, my view of her scar—a bumpy stretch of what looked like melted plastic—was partially cropped by the gold of her skirt lining.

"I was wondering about your statute of limitations in terms of any potential damages you might care to seek," I said.

"Uhhm," she said, nodding and leaving a stain of red on the brow of her lip. "I suppose I should sue you."

"May I touch it?"

"You may," she said.

Sitting there on the shuttle, getting tanked with my victim: now that's what I call burying the hatchet.

"So," I said, trying to muster a kind of casual ski-lift bonhomie. "What is Silverman, Bahr doing in Washington?"

"I could tell you, but I'd have to kill you," she sang back at me.

"Spare me, Vivian," I said. "What, are you shaking down Greenspan's boys for interest-rate information?"

The plane began its descent, and the conversation came to a loaded pause, with the two of us sitting there unbuckled, the empty middle seat suggesting a future, she with her pretty suède flats half kicked off, and a halo of bosses and stray clients she'd secretly slept with hanging above us in a stratosphere of money and intrigue. Her handbag was open on the seat between us, and I glimpsed the spine of Edith Wharton's collected ghost stories wedged between manila folders and God knows what else.

"So what do you think of me now?" I asked.

We were waiting in the cab line at National Airport, which refused to move, squinting at each other through an awful Washington heat.

"I think the men at your firm are not half bad-looking, and they do their job. What I mean is, they're good at what they do, and I appreciate that. I assume, therefore, that you are good at what you do, and frankly I'm surprised,



because you used to be so—I don't know . . . so greasy. But give a guy a few years, and you never know. The outcome is sometimes impossible to predict, sometimes inevitable. Are you listening to me?"

"Yes, Vivian."

"There's that, and the fact that you have a problem with women, and a problem with guns. You have a problem with women and guns and now, hello, all of a sudden you're a corporate lawyer."

Finally the cabs were coming.

"But that rat still runs your heart," she went on. "What do you think of me?"

"I have a policy," I said. We got into a black Alexandria cab.

"That must be new for you," she said, slamming the door. "I don't remember any policy."

"Here's the policy. I'm a lawyer, but I don't mix with narcs."

"That's too bad, you might learn something." Then, to the driver, she said, "1919 Connecticut. The Hilton." She turned back to me. "I don't associate with emotional delinquents in suits. How did you ever pass the—what do they call it? The moral-fitness section of the bar exam?"

"The review by the Committee on Character and Fitness? My friends lied for me."

Her meeting wasn't until the next morning. My meeting wasn't until the next morning. Our Alexandria cab took the long way, and together we gazed silently at the mostly vacant Virginia real estate that reflected a blue summer light.

"See this place—it's like Houston," she said. "Something like a thirty-five-per-cent occupancy rate. They went bananas a few years ago, then the crash, and now—what do you know? The lawyers get called in, and they're restructuring, refinancing, the works."

The air-conditioning in the cab was broken, and its beige plastic seats made my groin sweat. We turned on the driver. Why didn't he have a meter, and what the fuck was wrong with this city anyway, that you couldn't find a cab with a meter? We commiserated, showing our colors about the superiority of our city's taxis: even if they don't know where they are going, we told

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each other, at least they have meters. Vivian said it was all a District scam, and she told our driver where he could take his count. As we crossed Key Bridge and hit M Street traffic, our thighs touched. Then a little storm cloud of preoccupation passed over Vivian's face, and, watching her squint out the window, I suddenly felt the distracting presence of her deal in the making: "I could tell you, but I'd have to kill you." I stared out the window on my side and thought that if I was going to sleep with her I would have to get to the bottom of her Washington mess.

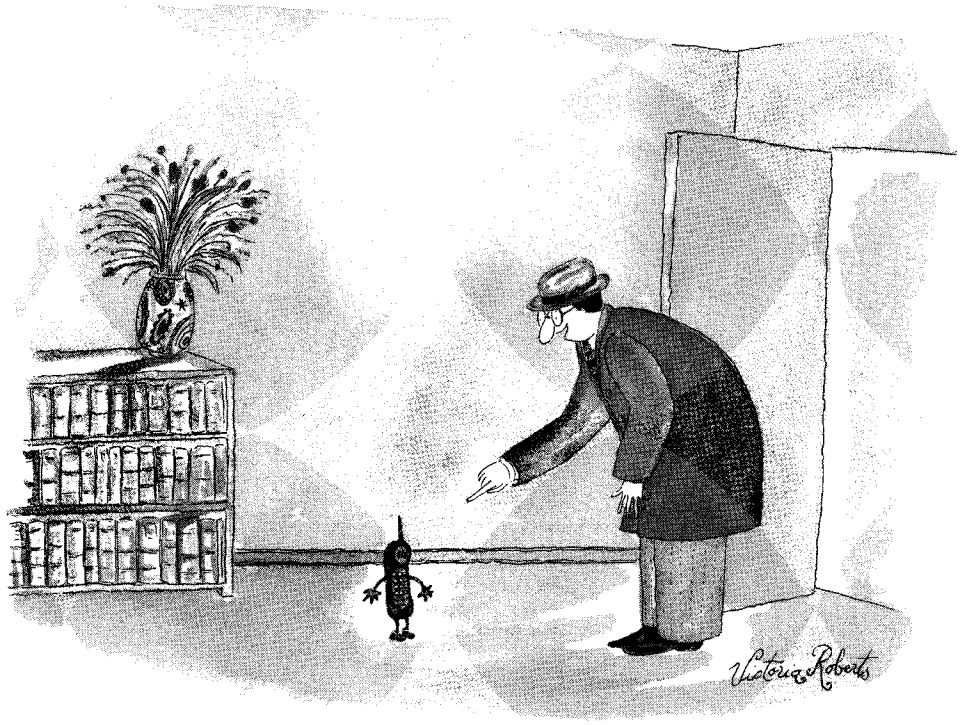
"Now you're supposed to reach up like you're yawning and put your arm across the back of the seat behind me," she said.

"I need a drink," I shot back.

She forced the driver off the road at a place called Dixie Liquors, and when she was out of the cab I went for the manila folders inside her bag. One was marked "S.E.C.," and inside it was a deposition request with a yellow highlighted section that read, "This request should not be construed as an adverse reflection upon any person, entity or security or as an indication by the Commission that any violation of the law has necessarily occurred."

Second folder was a bust—just some I.P.O. material; but the third, marked by a tiny yellow Post-it, was what I was after. It contained a handwritten letter on unmarked stationery, which read, "Vivian, here is a list of target companies for T.Z. They are: Tektar, Gamtrex, Colvan. As per our discussion Tuesday, avoid any overt quid pro quo for this takeover information. Instead impress upon T.Z. the fact that Silverman's contributions to candidates over this election cycle have no bearing on our municipal-bond dept. and *do not* merit the kind of negative *Journal* story we know he's working on. I don't have to remind you that publicity of this nature would—"

She was coming out of the liquor store. Luckily, a vicious sundown was in her eyes, and I was able to tuck the folders back into her bag. I was tying my shoes when she got into the cab.



"Stay!"

• •

A BRASS-HANDLED, marbleized, nominally Southern hotel bar is an efficient place in which to drink vodka, and on our second double Vivian said, "You know, I'm sorry about your friends. Throwing them out, I mean. What were their names again?"

"You should be. They both ended up getting really well-rounded educations. Fritz did his thesis on the history of the boomerang."

"Well, that's not my fault, is it?"

"As far as I'm concerned, you have blood on your hands, Vivian, and it will come back round to you."

We both laughed.

"I'm sorry," she said. "It was a control thing. I got over it a few years ago. I think it had something to do with . . . something to do with food, but I'm over it now."

"Well," I said, raising my glass. "Welcome to the meal."

Men in tuxedos began filtering into the bar. They were slender; many wore rimless glasses; some had dates. Apparently they were all attendees of the annual White House Correspondents' Association annual dinner. I took a long drink and gazed at the cheap candlelit cherrywood heartiness bathing their faces, and it came to me: What better place to offer up names of targeted takeover companies in exchange for the squelching of one of those wicked *Wall Street Journal* hatchet jobs than here, at ground zero, in Washington? Well, what did they expect, with the salary the average reporter makes? This T.Z. was probably lucky to make forty grand before taxes, and then there was the world of high finance he had to move through. Still, it was pretty sickening, and for a moment I leaned back in my chair and considered blowing her off. After all, wasn't she the same bitch she'd been in high school, merely moving through the center of a different injustice?

"I've got fifteen minutes before I'm supposed to meet someone here," Vivian was saying. "Do you mind if we take a walk? You know, this is the hotel Reagan was shot outside of."

On our way out, she paid a porter ten dollars to lead us to the side utility exit that the Great Communicator had used on that fateful day. We stood at the foot of the building in the heat. It was getting dark. But as I moved to

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kiss her, Vivian turned her head and displayed her neck tendons, made a sniffing face, and, right before contact, crumpled to the sidewalk. The contents of her black bag spilled out on the pavement, and this time the sight of it all filled me with a drunken paternal love. As I leaned over to scoop up the cosmetics and paperwork, decorously holding my tie into my suit (a sure sign of drunkenness for me), Vivian reached for her leg in feigned pain.

"I'm shot. I've been shot," she cried.

"There's something here from the Securities and Exchange Commission," I said. "I suggest you start getting into compliance, Vivian. You can start by standing up."

"Oh, for God's sake, please don't read that," she said.

Down the street, a man with a red turban walked out of a basement souvlaki restaurant and stared at us.

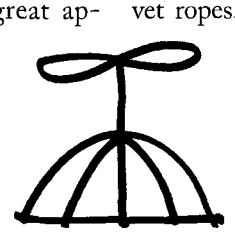
"Get up, Vivian, for Christ's sake. You'd be nowhere without Reagan."

Then, from a police-car window, a cop said, "Lady, are you staying at the hotel? Because if you are, if you're registered at the hotel, I strongly recommend you return to your room."

I flashed my key and seized Vivian by the armpits. "He shot me, you know," said Vivian to the cop. "The bastard shot me, and now we're going to be pressing some charges, aren't we, Alex? We're going to be pressing some charges."

"I see you two outside again in this shape, I'm slapping you both with a D.C. And that doesn't stand for the District of Columbia. Understand?"

The muffled sounds of great applause came from the adjoining room as we walked back into the bar. The President was in mid-address, and some tuxedoed attendees and, probably, opposition-party malcontents were having an openly defiant mid-dinner drink. They seemed quite dignified for journalists, but, then again, maybe they were congressmen or Hill staffers. Two out of five had the salt-and-pepper hair, and were no doubt drinking good bourbon—the Jason Robards thing—and three younger ones with wineglasses were laughing nervously, trying to please.



"I'm looking for the guy with the compromised face, but everyone seems to have this Three-Mile-Island grin," I said to Vivian. "Maybe he's in the other room with the President."

"Look," she said. "I'm going to have to ask you to skedaddle when he comes. Not that you look like a lawyer. I'm not saying that—that you look like a lawyer. Oh, my God, here he is, keep walking."

From behind a creased blue curtain mysteriously joined to the main dining room came T.Z. On his lapel was an oversized lamination, which he whisked off and gingerly placed in his pocket. His youthful, educated face and horn-rimmed glasses could not hide what I took to be the lurking financial disorder written in his features. I peeled away from Vivian's side and said to him in passing, "Missing the President's speech?"

"Excuse me?" I heard him say, and then came the double take and the tap on the shoulder. "No, no . . . excuse me, uh, how do you know Vivian?" His little worm face was right up against mine, seething with professional paranoia.

"I'm her broker," I said and marched into the lobby.

In the bathroom, I washed my face and drank some water, washed my face again, and pissed. Then I sat in the stall. It was a filthy world out there, and I went out to the souvlaki restaurant for a slice of pizza.

THE doors to the main dining room were flung open, and I caught a frontal glimpse of the President beyond the metal detectors and drooping velvet ropes. He was perched at a raised table—flanked last-supper style by big campaign contributors, his glinting fork plunged into an invisible dessert. People were standing up now in the twilight of the dinner, schmoozing from table to table, some with their pigeon ears cocked sideways to their partners' feeding lips. Vivian was alone in the barroom, which I now saw was in fact the same room, separated by curtains and a rolling partition wall.

"I'm a whore," she said as I sat down.

"Really? I'm taking a survey."

The bar was disconcertingly bright, and though the red webbed candle holder in front of us shed very little light, we hunkered down to it as if we were in deep darkness.

"Are you in P.R.?" I asked.

"Damage control. Is that part of the survey?"

"Maybe."

"Alex, I thought we were operating on a need-to-know basis here."

"O.K., fine, fine. But I didn't need to know you were a whore."

"This is the last time. I'm going to tell Bob I don't need this anymore, and I'm going to tell him tomorrow. He can just—"

"You're getting me off my survey question," I said. "And deviating from our need to know."

A gutter laugh from my victim.

"Does your date cover arbitrage?" I asked. "Does he write about the next company targeted for takeover?"

"He's doing a campaign-finance story on our bond department. We give a heap of money to elected road builders, I don't know. He's broke, but not as broke as I thought—not desperate broke."

"O.K., O.K. I'm taking a survey?"

"Shoot."

I was drowning in the pooled depths of a great flirtation. The vodka, the light, the pull of the declining ceremony next door, the partisan aura of the tuxedoed malcontents—for a moment the atmosphere swept away any objections I had to Vivian's task, and I was staring into the thing itself, the black hole of business in America.

"Here's the survey. They talk about 'tabling' summer associates at the firm. It's a sexual rite of passage that's beyond me. My feeling is, Go get a hotel room, for God's sake, you know? But there's one good one this year, and she's about to leave. What I'm asking you, Vivian, is would you lose all respect for me if I used undue leverage and tabled a summer associate?"

"You've never been tabled?" she shot back at me. "There was this one guy once. A big deal, very complicated." She waved her hand. "We tabled."

She *had* changed. Her crooked smile, her filthy errand—it had all turned a corner for her and become an essential hunger. The good-girl shame she had been suckled on had dissipated, and as we stood up I knew we had a deal. Together we went to look for a secret table at the Hilton, and it wasn't long before we found one. ♦

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CARRY THAT WEIGHT

Why do the Beatles endure? Two books offer new answers.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

THE Beatles looked like history even before they became it. At the height of their fame, they were omnipresent but invisible, as though they already belonged to another, more interesting era. From 1966 on, their American fans saw them only in cryptic film clips and animated cartoons and brief, unpredictable, uplifting appearances—singing "All You Need Is Love" or "Hey Jude" and then disappearing again. In the winter of 1966, after they had stopped performing for all of six months, a speed-talking disk jockey on WIBG-AM, in Philadelphia, used to broadcast a solemn "daily Beatles remembrance." There was even a poster, called "The Rockpile," that showed all the rock-and-roll groups (they didn't become "bands" until 1968) piled up as a human mountain, with the Beatles, benevolent wraiths, looking down upon the pile from above. When you turned your black light on, everybody's eyes shone. Only the Beatles glowed from head to toe.

They became so famous as to be practically incorporeal. But it was because they were that good. They were literally inimitable. If in those years you played rhythm guitar in a pickup rock band (a rhythm guitarist was someone without rhythm but in possession of a guitar), you knew that to become Led Zeppelin you needed one guy who could actually play the guitar, one guy who could sort of play it, and one guy who could shout hoarsely, all of which was easy. To become the Stones, you needed one guy who could actually play the guitar and one guy who could sort of sing while looking cool, which was hard but conceivable. But to become the Beatles you needed three guys who could actually sing and one guy who could actually play the guitar, and everybody had to look cool. That was why those of us who loved "Penny Lane" ended up playing "Whole Lotta Love" instead, over and over and over.

The Beatles were the one thing we had that we knew was for the books. (Bob Dylan was less a historical figure than a legendary one. If you loved him, you were jealous: you didn't want Bob for the books, you wanted him for yourself.) What nobody could have anticipated back then was that the Beatles would still look like our contemporaries even long after they had become history. The books we knew were coming have arrived, only to repeat what we already knew. Books about the Beatles, even thirty years on, tend not to be "readings" of the music and the times, and how the one arose from the other; they remain chronologies, almanacs, chronicles—fan literature. If the afterlife of Elvis illustrates, in parody form, how resurrection myths get started, the afterlife of the Beatles shows how it was that people came to write the Gospels: Don't tell me what it means, just tell me again what happened. There are now at least four books on the shelves of every chain bookstore which provide song-by-song, album-by-album, note-by-note accounts of records that their readers already know by heart. It's a weird genre. "The song begins with a riff chimed on twin guitars," an account of "Day Tripper" may assert, authoritatively, although if you were interested enough in the Beatles to buy the book, you would think that by now you would have figured out for yourself that this is how "Day Tripper" begins.

All the same, two of the newest of these books—"A Day in the Life: The Music and Artistry of the Beatles," by Mark Hertsgaard (Delacorte; $23.95), and "Revolution in the Head: The Beatles' Records and the Sixties," by Ian MacDonald (Holt; $25)—actually add a lot to what we know. If Wilfrid Mellers, who invented the song-by-song genre twenty years ago with his book "Twilight of the Gods," was the Beatles' Mark, narrating the story while it was still hot, Hertsgaard is their Luke, supplying a Gospel for the Gentiles and doubters, and MacDonald is their St. John, the mystic chronicler. Hertsgaard's book (some of which appeared in this magazine) is rooted in the facts of what the Beatles actually did, said, and played, the idea being that if all this is put in accurate order the truth will emerge. MacDonald supplies a vast metaphysical theory of the decline of Western civilization, with the Beatles merely serving as the vehicle for that demonstration. His book's introduction summarizes the past thirty years of world history ("Egged on by demagogues like Sartre and Foucault . . . extremists hijacked the hopeful energy of the Sixties, turning it into a rolling riot") to arrive at large and gloomy certainties that seem only distantly connected with the Beatles ("The decade's mass transition from sacred to profane represented a climactic stage in the historical rise of science"). MacDonald, a former editor of *New Musical Express*, believes so deeply that the Zeitgeist reveals itself in pop music that the worst thing he can find to say about Margaret Thatcher is that it is "no surprise that her favorite Sixties tune is 'Telstar' by The Tornados."

Still, MacDonald has ferociously exact ears. He *hears* things—for instance, that the bass part of "The Long and Winding Road," played by Lennon, is almost defiantly out of harmony. There are "recurring wrong notes at 0:28, 2:10 and 3:07; misstrikes at 2:39 and 2:52; drop-outs at 2:59 and 3:14; a fumble at 0:19; a vague glissando at 1:03; a missed final push at 3:26. One can hear McCartney grin at his partner's incompetence at 1:59." (So he even hears

The Beatles at work, 1964: The heart of their achievement was to have brought to a very sophisticated moment in the history of pop music a new kind of comic innocence. Photograph by Harry Benson.

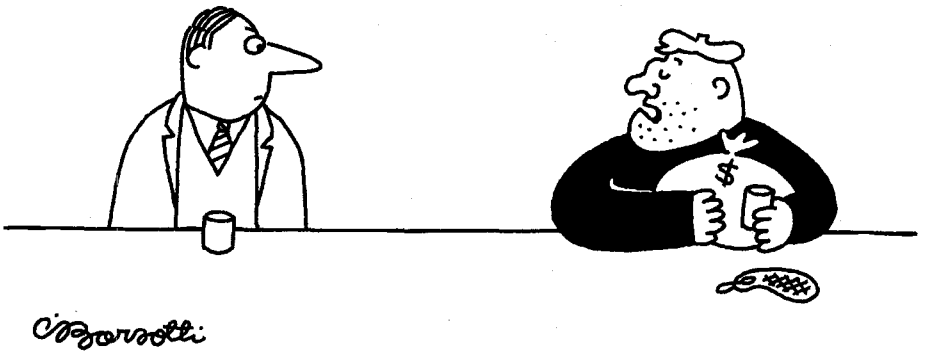
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grins.) His judgments are occasionally perverse—he thinks that "For No One," because it is restrained, is unemotional—but they are full of discovery and conviction. Hertsgaard, on the other hand, is a common-sense man, whose judgments have the smaller virtue of being based on accurate information. Hertsgaard painstakingly researches stories that you'd think had long ago sunk into legend. His book builds on the archivist Mark Lewisohn's two exhaustively researched books about the Beatles, "The Beatles: Recording Sessions" and "The Complete Beatles Chronicle"; the first told how every record between 1962 and 1970 was made, take by take and instrument by instrument, and the second told what the Beatles did nearly every day from 1960 to 1969. To Lewisohn's account of what the Beatles did, Hertsgaard wants to add a deeper sense of what the Beatles *thought* they were doing. He seems to have read everything any of them have ever said, and sifted out its truth and relevance.



THOUGH MacDonald is a self-conscious revisionist—he thinks that the Beatles were the end of everything rather than the beginning of something, and he admires them as a last-ditch attempt to save music for humanism rather than as the begetters of a new kind of pop—both he and Hertsgaard adhere, with reservations, to the Revised Standard Version. In this story, the Beatles came into an arid and emotionally retarded musical milieu and rejuvenated it with the authenticity of the American blues; they matured under the influence of Dylan, found their greatness under the direction of psychedelics, and emancipated rock and roll from pop and turned it into rock. On examination, though, their own evidence shows most of this story to be nearly the reverse of the truth. In fact, the heart of the Beatles' achievement was to have brought to a very sophisticated moment in the history of pop music a new kind of comic

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"I presume your innocence."

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innocence. The competitive fervor that really propelled their music was between Brian Wilson, of the Beach Boys, and Paul McCartney; and the group's highest accomplishment was to have managed to turn pop music, briefly, in an art-song direction that more or less began and ended with them.

It makes sense for books about the Beatles to focus on their songs—"their music and artistry," as Hertsgaard puts it—rather than on their times, because the songs were all the times they had. Lewisohn's book on what they were doing every day shows that mostly what they were doing was making music. In the sixties, John complained, "when everybody else was just goofing off and smoking dope, *we* were working twenty-four hours a day." They had less contact than almost anyone else with the forces that made the sixties interesting; they were introduced to LSD by their dentist.

That they ever got locked in a recording studio in the first place remains a little miraculous. The recently released album "Live at the BBC" consists mostly of their original Liverpool act—cover versions of American R. & B. material—and the group often sounds comically incongruous. Their great advantage was that they knew this about themselves. George Martin, who signed them, said, "They got that contract because of their enthusiasm, their presence, not because of their music." He signed them because he thought they were *funny*. (Martin had produced comedy, jazz, and classical music for Parlophone; one of his stars was Peter Sellers.) It was the Goons, not the Crickets, who hovered in spirit over their first meeting, and it was the Beatles' charm—rooted in their comic distance from the clichés of their own material—that won him over.

So their jokes were not merely a sideshow but the essence of what made them good. At the beginning of the BBC recordings, the Beatles are asked if they mind not being able to eat at restaurants without being recognized. "We go to ones where the people are so snobby—they're the type who pretend they don't know us," George says, and Paul adds, deadpan, "Social comment, that." The Beatles, for all their depths and their occasional chills, were comedians, with a comedian's attitude toward other people's culture. Everything good about them depended on their ability to do impressions and know that that was what they were doing. MacDonald says that when they were groping to explain their "advanced" songs on "Rubber Soul" and "Revolver" they called them "comedy songs," while some of their most famous serious songs, from "Michelle" to "I Am the Walrus," started off as studio jokes.

Compared not just with the people they were imitating but with the people they were ostensibly rejecting (Frank Sinatra, Sam Cooke, Nat Cole, and so on), the early Beatles sometimes sound naïve. ("I Want to Hold Your *Hand*"? You can imagine Sinatra snickering at that one.) There is nothing in their work as complicatedly sad as "Crazy" or "If I Love Again," much less "Here's That Rainy Day." What made them special was not conviction but a new kind of humor—ironic distance without disdain. Everything seems to happen in the comic conditional: If I were actually in love with a girl, this is the kind of song I would sing. The love songs sounded mostly in love with the *idea* of love songs, detached not only from any particular person but from any consistent emotion. ("P.S. I Love You," which sounds sad, is happy; "Help!," which sounds happy, is sad.) This detachment made their songs emotionally generalized but infinitely applicable; you could attach them to any girl you wanted and to any mood you happened to be in.

WHAT the Beatles put in place of clarity or even soulfulness was the joy of spontaneous discovery. What they put in place of storytelling was an amazingly complicated musical architecture, and a harmonic texture to match. It was this sounds-first approach, MacDonald points out, that really separated them from what had come before. As Hertsgaard observes, "There is far more going on within the typical Beatles song—more embellishments, more layers, textures, and dimensions of (unusual) sounds—than in most popular music." It was this combination of lyrical nonchalance and uncanny musical richness that made them matter. You could find in them whatever you wanted to find, because they had put in everything they had.

More than anything else, that richness was harmonic; it was their chords that attracted Bob Dylan. Given how little they knew, how did they leap so high? In this case, perhaps, it *was* the shoes. Putting aside all the big stuff that MacDonald goes on about—the transition from the sacred to the profane, the historical rise of science, and so forth—perhaps the most original thing about Lennon and McCartney was that they were among the first people who had ever tried to write pop songs on the guitar. The guitar is a peculiar songwriting instrument, since, unless you're highly trained, it insists on harmonies first, leaving you to chug along behind the chords and find a melody. A receptive, naïve musician on the guitar will create much more daring harmonies, without quite knowing what he's doing, than a "trained" musician might on the piano. MacDonald notices that almost all John Lennon's songs change chords with every new note—the kind of sophistica-

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VICTIM SONG

Oh, I have practiced victim art,
AIDS-spattered and insolent in heart—
I have put the hearse before the cart,
oh la-di-ra di-ra di-ra . . .

I must mask myself in a burlap vizard
and tape my mouth and cement my gizzard,
so I can't whisper, "'Tis hard, 'tis hard,"
oh la-di-ra di-ra di-ra . . .

I will lie among the liberal leaves
and rot gently while the red wind grieves
and the prizes go to the neocon thieves,
oh la-di-ra di-ra di-ra . . .

—HAROLD BRODKEY

tion available only to the untutored. The chromatic harmonies in "Michelle" were produced by playing a minor chord and then seeing what happened if you moved your fingers a fret on each measure. The Beatles' music wasn't just sounds first—it was fingers first.

There were a lot of other fingers and guitars out there in the sixties, of course, and though some of them, too, serendipitously found impressive things (can anyone remember the name of the Zombie who stumbled onto "She's Not There"?), no one found as many as the Beatles. You needed the right voices to sing along with the fingers, and the right ears to hear what they were doing. It was their producer, George Martin, who had the ears. On the evidence of the new books, he was not the fifth Beatle, as he used to be called, but the third. Martin was a fully paid-up, classically educated musician without an ounce of musical snobbery. He was, Hertsgaard says, as self-invented as they were—he had a posh accent, but his dad was a carpenter—and though he recognized that their gift was comic, he paid them the compliment of taking them absolutely seriously. (John Lennon said of their collaboration that Martin would ask, "Well, have you heard an oboe?" "No, which one's that?" "It's this one." "*That'd* be nice.")

Long before Martin actually added classical instruments to their records, he took their music in a classical direction. The songs are tightly scripted. Jazz had made pop instrumental music vocal—full of wails and slides and human sounds. The Beatles made vocal music instrumental again. John Lennon's singing is often wonderfully expressive, but it is very rarely interpretative; it hits the beats, and moves in close harmony with the other voices. Though there are by now plenty of professional Beatles imitators, no one has ever really done the songs differently and still done them well. You can't really interpret a Beatles song. All you can do is sing it again.

All questions about the Beatles turn, finally, on the John-or-Paul question: Who ruled, and how? And each of the two new evangelists has something new to say about the collaboration. Hertsgaard makes the point that it was less a case of opposites attracting than a case of two soul mates choosing to *become* opposites: even as late as 1965, a lot of the rockers are by Paul and many of the ballads by John. MacDonald, for his part, argues against the orthodoxy, promoted by Lennon's martyrdom, that it was Paul who led them through their early, conventionally commercial phase and John who drove them forward to something more. MacDonald saw the sequence as just the other way around: John could take them only up to a point—"A Hard Day's Night" is his masterpiece—and the daring, musically resourceful, "mind-expanding" Beatles of "Revolver" and "Sgt. Pepper" were largely invented by Paul. MacDonald writes, "While the group's former leader mused in his psychedelic dream, his versatile partner was taking over, doing so as he approached the summit of his creativity." This makes sense, since McCartney had much the larger musical gift—preposterously large, in fact, and still impressive even in its current tattered state. (Both writers remind us of something that seemed obvious at the time—that the threat to the Beatles' supremacy as musicians came from the remarkable mid-period Beach Boys. It was "Pet Sounds" that stirred the Beatles into "Strawberry Fields Forever.") Lennon had an unanalyzable gift for making people do anything he wanted them to. On the evidence, Lennon's chief accomplishment may have been to impose his standards on his partner by remaining so intimidating a figure to everyone around him that he frightened his collaborator into working at the top of his talent.



ONE morning in June of 1967, that speed-talking d.j. in Philadelphia played a new Beatles LP. "That's *long*," he said dubiously after the last, enveloping chord of "A Day in the Life." But only months later he intoned, in a voice full of karma, that that same scary chord was "the sound of progressive rock." As the most famous of Beatles albums, and one of the all-purpose transforming events of the time, "Sgt. Pepper" still demands explanation, and still resists it. Lewisohn points out that, owing to an oddly old-fashioned top-of-the-pops principle of not repeating singles on albums, the two best songs of the recording sessions, "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Penny Lane," were left off the album. This meant that what the album lost in quality it gained in shimmer and coherence: you hear the encompassing orchestral color rather than the individual songs.

The subject of both of those great songs is nostalgia for childhood, and both depend—as does the entire album—on their invocation of a coherent, charming, English past. Meter maids, music halls, Mr. Kite's benefit, the Isle of Wight—the Lonely Hearts Clubs themselves, come to that—are the chiming images of the classic record of the

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mid-sixties. When grown-up life intrudes, at the end, it is as motorcars and accidents.

"Sgt. Pepper" also provoked into existence, by its complexity, and by its frenzied reception, serious rock criticism, whose distance from its subject still accounts for the particular oddity of books about the Beatles. Rock criticism, far from being the arena of lowbrow levelling that haunts the imagination of Allan Bloom and the neoconservatives, is the last refuge of some pretty creaky highbrow notions. It took over, from the classroom, one of the most straitjacketed and limiting of all highbrow manners: the Romantic story of art as transgressive rebellion. In the hands of its critics, from gifted oddballs like Lester Bangs to clenched polemicists like Greil Marcus, rock became not a pleasing form of commercial entertainment but the story of a series of revolts *against* commercial entertainment. What made Dylan or the Beatles (and, later, punk and rap) remarkable, critics claimed, was that they revolted against ersatz commercial entertainment, in the interests of authenticity. (And so we read in the current issue of *Harper's Bazaar* that Juliana Hatfield's lyrics "come off less Nietzschean than in the past.")

The Romantic myths of authenticity and transgression have never worked out very well for authentically Romantic, transgressive art, since the rebellious always turns out to overlap with the artist's need to make a buck and please an audience. And those myths were not likely to work out any better when they were applied to a system that was being overseen by Ahmet Ertegun and Lew Grade. The transgressive Romantic gestures that the rock critics credited their heroes with were being advanced through exactly the same commercial system that had advanced the old ersatz culture. You had to search for the moments of authenticity the way a physicist looks for subatomic events, with an eye for the nearly instantaneous half-life. Rock criticism, to make sense, ought to be a theory of why cheap music is potent, what makes it potent, and why, if it is potent enough, it isn't cheap after all. Rock criticism should have been a theory of tunes. Instead, it became an argument for tunelessness.

MacDonald's overreaching—the particular manner of his overreaching, anyway—is a good example of what went wrong with rock writing. For all his virtues, he can't quite accept that he is writing about popular songs. This is because he inherited a critical manner that insisted that pop music was at its best when it was neither popular nor musical. There is no way to connect the handful of stereotyped stories that rock critics like to tell—Rebel Without a Cause, Rebel with a Cause, Cause Without a Rebel—to the way the actual words go with the tunes, and the way the tunes go with each other. When you are dealing with a phenomenon that, like the Beatles, is almost entirely musical, the tradition at hand has no coherent, encompassing story to give you. And though the whole thrust of MacDonald's book points toward something much more sensible, even he cannot avoid using an irrelevant critical language, for lack of a better one. So he ends up castigating the words of "Here, There and Everywhere" because, like the lyrics of every love song, "they fail to avoid sentimentality." To have to pretend that pop songs aren't love songs and shouldn't sound like them is perverse. Rock criticism continues to miss the actual achievement of sixties pop, and of the Beatles, which was to make everybody see that you could surrender authenticity as an idea without giving up on sincerity as an emotion.

THE Beatles, bless them, stayed fake. Their white album, "The Beatles," was a frankly hybrid series of musical impressions of other people, though at that point, in 1968, they had begun the squabbling that led to their breakup. This might seem to be a story told so many times that no new light can be shed on it, but Hertsgaard, by looking at the chronology and rereading the oblique commentary of the Beatles themselves, makes a surprisingly convincing case that the breakup, far from being inevitable, was essentially an in-group quarrel that got out of hand. John Lennon had told the other Beatles in September of 1969 that he was leaving but hadn't done anything to make it public and had stayed involved in Beatles projects, including the bad Phil Spector version of the album "Let It Be." Had McCartney held tight—had he written songs and waited for John to get as fed up with bed-ins for peace as he himself had—we might have had the Beatles for much longer, and no Yoko Ono records, either.

Would that have been a good thing? On the evidence, probably not. Their last recorded album, "Abbey Road," is their best, in part because it sounds like an ending. It has the musical coherence of "Sgt. Pepper" but, for the first time, builds its unity from deep musical structure—out of the repeating arpeggios (borrowed, as John Lennon said, from Beethoven) and broken minor chords that run from "I Want You" through to the end of the record. Short of going "third stream," it's hard to see how they could have gone forward. (Actually, a few years ago, when Paul McCartney finally did go third stream, with his much maligned "Liverpool Oratorio," he wrote a handful of tunes that were his best since the Beatles.) Still, what came after the breakup was sad and sloppy enough to make one think that something could have been saved. For the Beatles, the seventies were like other people's sixties: drugs, laziness, and fuzzy-edged work. Part of the problem was built into the musical method: the trouble with a fingers-first method of composition is that sooner or later you run out of new places to put your fingers. This hit John Lennon particularly hard; he just ran out of tunes. When he released his last album, he was still working on the three or four musical ideas he had worked out fifteen years before. ("Woman" is "If I Fell" in very slightly different garb.) Paul didn't run out of tunes—there are, all told, as many terrific tunes in late McCartney as in early, but they float like hard candies in a suet pudding. (Recently, he wrote a tune as lovely and near-perfect as anything on "Abbey Road." It was called "Golden Earth Girl.")

WHAT shall we make of them? Their refusal to retreat into history has had the effect of locking popular music under a bubble as hard and sunless as the Astrodome. All the musical air gets recycled. Most of their fans have moved on to a million other, and maybe deeper, enthusiasms. But by moving on to other songs and other singers we hear again the music we first loved—hear a little of the Beatles in Baroque concertos and a little in R.E.M.—and so we may have also be-

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gun to realize that rock really was a reading of music history rather than simply an event in it. Seen at any kind of distance, popular music seems a continuous stream, with Chuck Berry flowing from Nat Cole, the Stones from the Basie "Atomic" band, and Paul McCartney from Richard Rodgers.

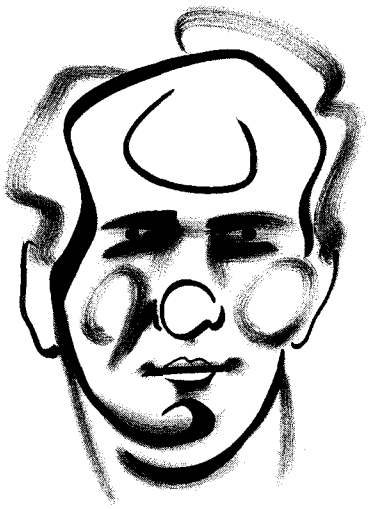
Maybe the accomplishment of rock lay less in its disruption of style than in its renewal of innocence. The singular thing about sixties pop—and about the Beatles, its greatest exponent—is its optimism. This may be the hardest thing about their music to accept, since cheerfulness, when it breaks in, leaves our serious critical language helpless; it is the one quality that we don't have an intelligent vocabulary for. Most good popular music is *sad:* folk songs are tragic; Stephen Foster pines away; Sinatra's work, too, ends up in a posture of loneliness, a lamppost in the moonlight. The Beatles, even in their most self-consciously artful work, run just the other way. The friends help, the hole gets fixed, things get better, and you haven't even turned the record over yet. ♦

THE STRIPPER AND THE SWAN

A poet's new voice emerges in a new collection.

BY WAYNE KOESTENBAUM

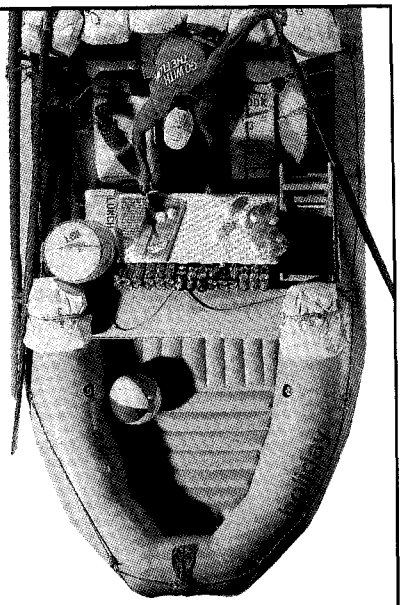
A GREAT poet leaves behind an opus and an aura. The opus instructs; the aura inhibits. Much of the best contemporary American verse is haunted by the auras of Elizabeth Bishop and Marianne Moore, whose influence and reputation have a life separate from the perversities and felicities of their actual poems. Gertrude Stein once observed, "If every one were not so indolent they would realise that beauty is beauty even when it is irritating and stimulating not only when it is accepted and classic." The poems of Bishop and Moore—in death they were not divided—have come to seem accepted classics, and poets who wish to be classical thus borrow the Bishop-Moore manner, or what is believed to have been their manner, a stance to which cultural authority, in literary circles, adheres. Much as T. S. Eliot once stood for impersonal allusiveness, Bishop and Moore now stand for a sublimation of sensuality into painterly observation, and for a curator's dispassionately appraising relation to circumstance. Bishop, who in general resisted categories, accepted the value of "closets, closets and more closets!"; the poets who have absorbed her mannerisms and her vision embrace the décor of reticence, but mostly as a high stylishness. For Bishop or Moore, discretion wasn't a choice; it was a personal necessity. I see in their descendants too little of the mortification, the punishing displacement, that pushed these progenitors toward an art of superior tact, of taxonomic precision. Even Bishop's famous ordinariness (or, rather, what James Merrill referred to as her "instinctive, modest, lifelong impersonations of an ordinary woman") was also, at every gloved instant, mournfully evasive. Her poetic heirs can reproduce the patrician ease but not the terror, the shudder of exile.



Henri Cole

PAUL HAMLYN

In his third book, "The Look of Things" (Knopf; $20), Henri Cole separates himself from the flock of Bishop and Moore imitators by writing, with new directness, about unsanctioned sexual desire, about AIDS, and about loss. For example, in the poem "Buddha and the Seven Tiger Cubs" Cole describes a trip to a strip joint; Moore



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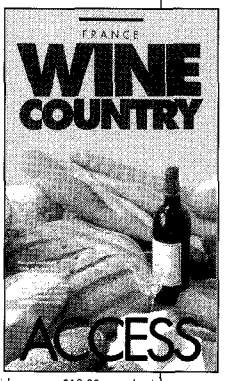
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could hardly have written about such dives, though she might have been curious about them. In a characteristic gesture, Cole compares a male stripper to a swan, and seems, by that metaphor, to be executing a familiar retreat from explicitness:

> When one slings his leg proudly
> across the bar rail where I sit, I kiss
> a five dollar bill and tuck it in his
> belt.
> He's a black swan straining its elastic
> neck to eat bread crumbs and nourish
> itself.

But the stripper is not a swan, and the poet knows, and is nourished by, this fact; Cole is no longer content to remain in the realm of the merely lapidary, the self-consciously coloratura. In his first two volumes, "The Marble Queen" and "The Zoo Wheel of Knowledge," virtuosity seemed pushed to its extremes; here he has relaxed, and, as a consequence, he produces lines of natural and nonchalant brio: "The planted pots of Love-lies-bleeding / spoke only of loss to the blue hummingbird that wanted them." He is at home with simple statements as well as with labyrinthine periodic sentences; he can understate, can step back with courtly distance from the scene he is describing; in stanzas as shapely as topiary he can salute a visual world he honestly loves; he can write about the soul stumbling against quotidian impediments. And he can approach a variety of subjects, from first love to cabbage butterflies, from a wedding announcement in the *Times* to a family shocked at a son's homosexuality:

> If my family has regrets,
> it's over gin and furtive sex;
> the General, my brother, tries—
> *refusing any compromise*—
> to keep his sons from knowing me.

Though he is more often syntactically expansive, he can be epigrammatic when he wants. Commanding a full range of idioms, he assembles poems of a sculptural fineness. Most often, they achieve beauty by sounding a note of severe, unsentimental forlornness. Notice how the following stanza, from "Land of Lemons," holds the full sentence fast in its clamp, and how Cole reveals his soul but also holds back, in a sort of prophylaxis against delirium:

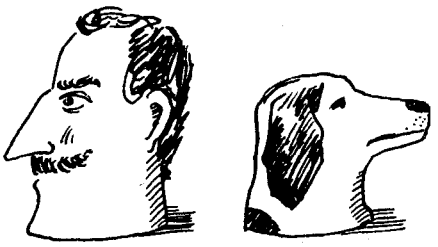
> Under burnt orange ceramic roofs
> sloped whimsically as in a child's
> drawing,
> near a stone fountain where four
> ornamental
> dolphins blew spring water into a
> pool
> from which pigeons and shepherds
> alike drank,
> on a street called Repentance, in a
> room
> overlooking a convent where the
> weary nuns,
> wearing starched wimples, watched
> with joy
> as I blew bubbles into the passage
> between us,
> I lived, that year, like a church
> mouse
> to whom everything still seems
> possible;
> and found cake crumbs everywhere
> I hunted.

And at the poem's end Cole stuns us with a kind of closure he is fond of, a termination that doesn't oversimplify but, rather, opens out into mystery (such as, in the poem "Katrina's Bedroom," the haunting coda, "ignorant thought in the mansion, / undisturbed, burns on and on"):

> Even when a mistral heightened
> claims made on us
> by ordinary life and the dark blue sea
> snapped
> like a wet loose sail, we stumbled on
> a place
> in a field of waving rape where
> gigantic
> steel pylons, shouldering high-voltage
> wires,
> stood erect as stick-figure men
> drawn to defend
> us and the wild unaffected poppies.

In that line, "us and the wild unaffected poppies," with its endearingly natural rhythmic looseness, Cole satisfies our wish to imagine that, amid mutability, details as wild and oblivious as the poppy, with its powers of morphine and dream, remain to succor the poet in the land of the lemons he happily, for a season, inhabits.

In "Eating Figs Under the White Rocks," another lancing moment—in which the sublimity, never expressed directly, all comes *from below*—folds betrayal into a sentence that is pure decorum, a sentence splayed over neat couplets. It begins not with a confession of sadness but with a rapt description of a



mollusk. But notice how the sadness moves, in counterpoint, against the glories of cicadas and mollusk, and how Cole adopts zoological details to provide more rush and freight to the nested-in admission of his own romantic loss:

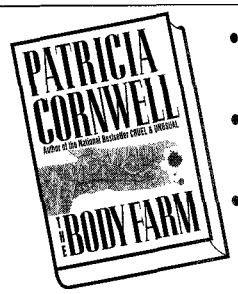
> Head and body withdrawn, or
> almost, a mollusk
> inscribed something neither you nor
> I could read
>
> on a giant sunflower's leaf,
> unless, that is, it only said what we'd
> *always known:*
>
> that unlike the chorus of molting
> cicadas
> transmitting on wavelengths far off
> as Eden,
>
> none of us—not your father napping
> in a slingchair
> or even you, who would betray me—
> could ever return again.

COLE'S poems expect to be read by a highly critical audience, and they mean to pass the test. But their expectation of reward confines some of them in a safe harbor of restraint and polish. Cole has already mastered the mode of sounding, in Gertrude Stein's words, "accepted and classic." Sometimes I wish his poems sounded more "irritating and stimulating," even if it meant that, far from revealing themselves as the products of industrious work, they appeared to be the fruits of indolence. Elizabeth Bishop's poems were written from a vantage point of isolation, and their discretion is a consequence of her wish to navigate, through art, the contradictions of her difficult life. What moves me in her poems is the way they subtly speak about that isolation; I am moved, in other words, by her uncertainty. In Cole I hear an undercurrent of loss and a sympathetic hunger. ("I had been so lonely, hungry as a snake," he writes.) But his assured technique is not always matched by a situation of metaphysical or existential extremity, and so the perfection of the poems can begin to seem principally an announcement that art of a certain order has been achieved. Much of the time, "The Look of Things" announces that Cole belongs; it ratifies his position as an authorized voice. But the best moments in the book function in a contrary spirit. They suggest that Cole does *not* belong; that virtuosity, though enjoyed, must also be abandoned; that poetry, even the most decorous, is haunted and fuelled by the spectre of its own disobedience. ♦

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RECOMMENDED READING

Waiting for the Dark, Waiting for the Light

by Ivan Klíma, translated from the Czech by Paul Wilson (Grove; $21)

In Klíma's cunning new novel of shifting realities, Pavel is an aging filmmaker in an unnamed Communist country who works as a top cameraman at the official television station. As a young man, he tried to flee across the border, and served time in prison as a result; now he takes home a fat paycheck, sleeps with a woman he doesn't love, and dreams of one day making a film that really means something. But when the idealistic protesters he's been staring at through his viewfinder finally succeed in toppling the government, Pavel discovers that he has atrophied in his position of suspended animation; he is waiting only for death. Klíma examines this seemingly simple moral tale through a sort of narrative kaleidoscope that keeps turning Pavel's life in on itself, continually reconfiguring the usual questions of clemency and condemnation.

The Age of Consent

by Geoffrey Wolff (Knopf; $22)

Maisie, a girl of fifteen, dives naked off a high rock ledge into a shallow pool, in front of the whole town. It takes almost ten years for her studious, adoring brother to find out why. When, as a high-school history teacher, he encounters a fifteen-year-old girl who has been molested, he recognizes for the first time what went wrong for Maisie all those years ago; he investigates, and takes shocking, satisfying action.

The Commodore

by Patrick O'Brian (Norton; $22.50)

This is the seventeenth novel in O'Brian's series following Captain (now Commodore) Jack Aubrey and his surgeon friend, Stephen Maturin, through the naval side of the Napoleonic Wars. Although O'Brian is ingenious at devising new adventures, it is the richness of his characters which justifies his readers' continuing enthusiasm. The most arresting moments in this installment come not in battle but in dramas of parenthood and marriage far from the sea. O'Brian acknowledges Jane Austen as one of his inspirations, and she need not be ashamed of the affiliation.

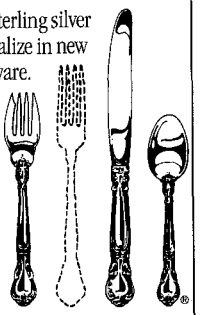
Jasmine Nights

by S. P. Somtow (St. Martin's; $23.95)

The life of an aristocratic Thai boy in 1963 includes bacon and eggs as well as *nam pla;* "Limbo Rock" and "The Outer Limits"; the mashed potato, the twist, and his guardian aunt's Cleopatra hairdo. He himself is a bookish Anglophile, but he begins to be transformed by friendship with a black American boy who prefers street argot to the "prestige dialect."

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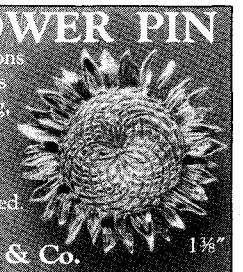
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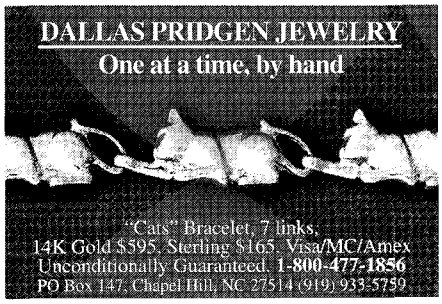
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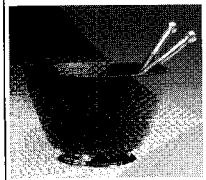
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BOULEZIAN NIGHTS

A composer-conductor is fêted in concerts and new recordings.

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

PIERRE BOULEZ'S extended, travelling seventieth-birthday party with the London Symphony Orchestra, which began in London with a magnificent series of eight concerts, has just visited Carnegie Hall for a more compact celebration of the music Mr. Boulez loves best. That choice category must surely, and with good reason, include his own works, for he's shown a strong symptom of love in his perpetual anxiety over his music, in his repeated efforts, through revision, to set it on the right path. What he loves best also includes the same works of the same composers he was programming when he began his career as a conductor, in the late fifties. The first complete concerts he directed in Europe, in January, 1959, placed pieces of his own in a context including Berg, Webern, Debussy, and Stravinsky. This 1995 tour adds only Messiaen, Bartók, and Ravel.

After the mixed experiences of the seventies, when Mr. Boulez's positions as music director in New York and London led him to take on repertory with which he had little sympathy (Brahms's "German Requiem" represented perhaps the furthest—and furthest possible—alienation of himself from himself), he has returned to the music that for him is home. And his performances with the L.S.O., to judge from those I heard in London, have had the joy of a homecoming. There are places in these scores which open up when he's around: much of Bartók's "Miraculous Mandarin"—especially the last and most lubricious of the clarinet cajolings, and the frenetic chase—and the first movement of Ravel's "Le Tombeau de Couperin," where he always pushes the oboe soloist to a speed that's just uncomfortable, and thrillingly so. Stravinsky evidently excites Mr. Boulez as much now as ever. Berg is another long-standing favorite, not least when Jessye Norman is around to sing the Seven Early Songs and the "Altenberglieder," as she did in London, and as she does on a new Sony record with Mr. Boulez and the L.S.O.

The Seven Early Songs have a wonderful way with nostalgia. Berg wrote the original versions, with piano accompaniment, when he was in his early twenties, at an age and in a culture (turn-of-the-century Vienna) prone to succulent regret; his orchestration, two decades later, added further layers of distance and enchantment, for, while the soprano still sounds out from the comfortable, ripe, romantic world of 1905-08, the instruments around her are wandering into weirder and wilder regions that for her are a "not yet," regions to be discovered soon, as Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern travelled into atonality. The singer is accompanied by her composer's own sly, adoring critique of her enthusiasms and her longings. She sings of misty nights, autumn, forest paths, and love, and the orchestra tries to comprehend her from somewhere after a catastrophe that is still in her future. The orchestra knows more than she does; Mr. Boulez, in the clarity of his performance, shows us how much more. Yet it may seem that the singer knows more than the orchestra, because she glides—and Ms. Norman glides superbly—within a world where music comes to meet us with consolation, where it's never strange, where it seems to know us.

This work's special quality depends on its dual dating, on the fact that it belongs at once in 1905-08 and in 1928—or, rather, that it belongs wholly in neither. And perhaps Mr. Boulez feels a

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particular affection for it because so many of his pieces similarly straddle time. Among works on the tour, the third "Improvisation sur Mallarmé," which he first presented, in the late fifties, as a wonderland of alternative pathways and colliding colors, became a fixed, more uniform monument in the eighties; and the "Livre pour Cordes," which began as the first movement of a string quartet in 1948-49, was reworked for string orchestra in 1968, and drastically altered again two decades after that.

Revision has effectively unhitched these works from history: if we ask when the "Livre pour Cordes" was written, there's no easy answer. That makes Mr. Boulez's current position very different from what it was thirty-six years ago, however similar his concert programs. In 1959, by presenting his pieces in the company of the most radical music of his most radical predecessors, he was telling a story of progress: his music was to be heard as uniting and furthering the developments initiated in music between "Prélude à 'L'Après-Midi d'un Faune' " and "The Rite of Spring." But that story has stalled. Since 1959, the great bulk of his music has consisted not of new pieces, continuing the revolution, but of amendments, revisiting it and, by implication, compromising it. So, inevitably, the arrows have fallen out of the earlier music he performs, and out of how he performs it: "The Rite" is now less a herald, more a magnificent achievement in itself. (Yet he shows his consistent attachment to the revolutionary moment in his preference—quite against his practice with regard to his own music—for original versions, including the rarely heard prototypical "Petrushka," whose added richness he made telling in one of the London concerts.)

The turn in Mr. Boulez's concerns from long history (works as points on a line from plainchant to now) to short history (works as fulfillments of their own potential) may explain the prominence that Ravel has come to have for him, for Ravel is all about maximum accomplishment. There was no Ravel in 1959. The awakening seems to have come about in the early seventies, when Mr. Boulez began giving splendid per-



MICHAEL CRAWFORD

Pierre Boulez at seventy: a musical homecoming.

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formances of "Daphnis et Chloé," demonstrating a breadth and an ease that were new and surprising. More recently, he's made an orchestration of Ravel's "Frontispice," which is his only adaptation of another composer's work other than his replacement for the missing celesta part in Debussy's "Chansons de Bilitis." Perhaps where once he identified with Debussy, as a liberator of music, he would now align himself, if resignedly, more with Ravel, as one of music's consummate fashioners. There are even direct echoes of Ravel (and, indeed, of Berg) in much of his recent music—for example, the latest versions of "Notations," "Le Visage Nuptial," and ". . . explosante-fixe . . ."—not only in the extraordinarily sophisticated scoring but also in the exquisitely exacerbated harmony, which itself speaks a language more of stasis than of dynamism.

THE changes in Mr. Boulez's attainments and desires as a performer will be permanently available for pleasure and consideration, thanks to a number of new Deutsche Grammophon recordings. Disks devoted to Debussy, Webern, and Mahler (the Sixth Symphony) have been released recently; a Bartók album is due this month, and a Messiaen anthology in the fall.

Understandably, Mr. Boulez wants to see his conducting career as still a story of progress, and has pointed out that now he not only knows his chosen works better but is readier to listen to what orchestral musicians have to offer. This is clear. Indeed, there wouldn't be much point in playing Bartók's "Hungarian Sketches" other than as a virtuoso conversation piece, which is what the work becomes in the hands of Mr. Boulez and the Chicago Symphony. But a comparison of the 1992 recording of the "Dance Suite," on the same all-Bartók record, with a 1972 version from Mr. Boulez's Philharmonic days (reissued by Sony) shows that there have been some losses along the way. True, the 1992 performance is much more secure. But what was insecure, even reckless, about the 1972 account was part of what made it Boulezian: the lurching tempo changes, the crazy prestissimo in the second movement, the glacial string sound, the separation of colors, the closeness of the music often to a snarl. Professionalism is gained at the expense of personality.

Luckily, though, it doesn't have to be so. The Messiaen record—with a "Chronochromie" performance that's loud with metal colors and iridescences, and also has subtler shades and sheens, all paraded by rhythm—is outstanding. So, in its quieter way, is the Webern disk, featuring musicians of the Ensemble InterContemporain and, in Christiane Oelze, a singer who can make a two-octave leap not a scream but a delicate flicker of lyrical freshness. This is Webern with the dew still on it. Webern was an ardent naturalist, but, where once Mr. Boulez emphasized the mineral, crystalline elements of the music—hard form, hard counterpoint, hard pulse—now he shows, in his delicacy with harmony, texture, and phrase, that these pieces are flowers, too.

Also wonderful is the new Debussy record, on which, as on the Messiaen, Mr. Boulez conducts the Cleveland Orchestra. Certainly there's no dilution of individuality here. So many gestures will be immediately familiar as visual impulses to anyone who has seen Mr. Boulez conduct: the quick snap of a hand thrust away from the body, the rapid four-four beating that is almost regular pulsation. The recording also follows a Boulezian tradition in varying the sound made by the women's voices in "Sirènes," from openmouthed exhilaration to a toughness that makes one think there must be male altos among these sirens. But the sound all through is more glorious, as well as much more secure, than in any of his previous recordings of this repertory. "La Mer" is splendid, "Jeux" is magical, and even the short "Rhapsodie" with solo clarinet comes up a masterpiece. ♦

ALL'S RIGHT WITH THE WORLD DEPARTMENT

[*From the Exponent, student newspaper of Purdue University*]

There will be some unusual happenings on the campus of Purdue tomorrow. An alternate universe of floating flames, sewer music, levitation and an absence of gravity will make you question the world we live in, considering that 20 percent of the population does not know the sun revolves around the earth.

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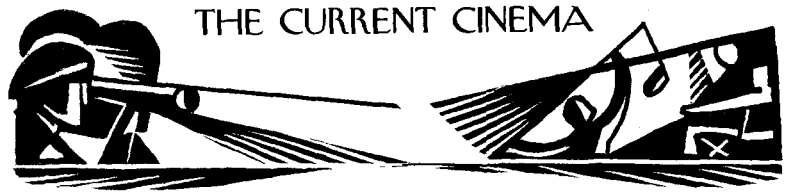
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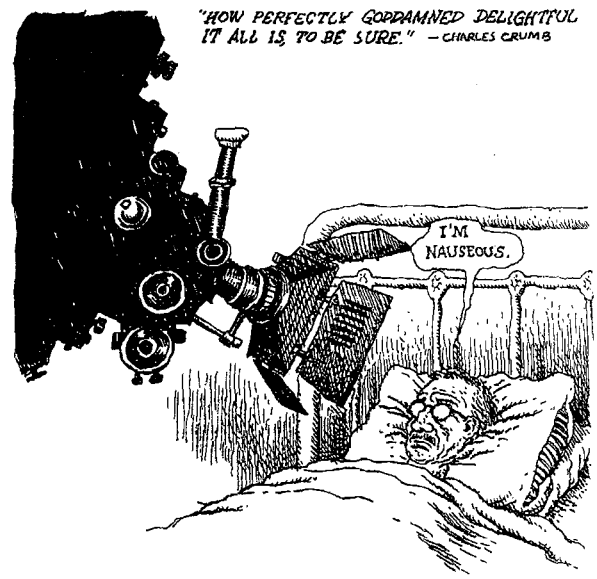


MR. UNNATURAL

A portrait of the artist R. Crumb, and a new "Kiss of Death."

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

TERRY ZWIGOFF'S documentary "Crumb," about the underground-comics artist R. (for Robert) Crumb, is a brilliant, scary movie—by a wide margin the best American film of the year so far. Documentaries about artists tend to play like life-achievement-award tributes. This one doesn't, because the filmmaker has too much respect for his subject's peculiar and disturbing sort of satirical genius; he understands that a warm, uncritical celebration of Crumb's work would be false to the art's essentially misanthropic spirit. "Crumb" reveals more of its subject's private life than most films would dare to, and Zwigoff—with the artist's coöperation—unearths some pretty unsavory stuff, especially about Crumb's family background. Robert's childhood, in the late forties and fifties, seems to have been a kind of middle-class gothic nightmare: the hero cowering, along with his four siblings, in various dark corners of the imagination in order to protect himself from the bullying rage of his ex-marine father and the volatile behavior of his amphetamine-crazed mother. While the movie is reviewing Crumb's career, from his psychedelic-era heyday to the present, and following him as he goes about his everyday activities, it's also telling this harrowing story about a damaged family. Robert's father is dead now, and his two sisters refused to participate in the film, but his mother and his brothers, Charles and Maxon, who do appear onscreen, supply more than enough evidence to persuade us that Robert's strange, bitter comic sensibility grew in really poisonous soil. In this picture, the underground that Crumb's art has emerged from isn't the happy-hippie counterculture of the sixties but someplace older and deeper—the Dostoyevskian underground of frustration, resentment, and despair.



R. CRUMB

It's no wonder, you think, that so many of Crumb's drawings are exaggerated depictions of anxiety. His male characters, in particular, almost always appear to be approaching psychotic states of agitation, no matter what situation they find themselves in. Whether they are about to be squashed by something large and powerful or are in the throes of passion with an avid, voluptuous woman, they wear more or less the same expression: eyes bugged out, hair standing on end, facial muscles contorted with strain, pores spraying perspiration like a lawn sprinkler. These are the guys Crumb obviously identifies with. The sleek and the sweatless—businessmen, glib gurus, smug intellectuals, suburban dads, mellow flower children—are usually villains and always the objects of scorn. "Crumb" at times

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comes perilously close to succumbing to the analytic hubris common in biographies of artists: the temptation to treat the relationship between the life and the work as a connect-the-dots exercise, a portrait made up of straight, ruled lines drawn between biographical sources and artistic products. But Zwigoff, who has known Crumb for more than twenty years, finally doesn't allow the audience (or himself) the illusion that the movie has captured the artist's essence for posterity. Crumb is willfully elusive, a fugitive by temperament, and one of the last images in the picture is that of a moving van: the artist, in his late forties, is fleeing America and resettling in France. In the end, we find ourselves watching his dust.

And Zwigoff makes us realize that, in a sense, that's what we've been doing all along—that the movie is, in fact, the story of a long goodbye, of creativity as a slow, agonizing process of estrangement. The originality of "Crumb" lies in its unsparing yet oddly sympathetic portrayal of an artist's detachment from himself and from the world he lives in. We see Crumb, with his sketchbook, wandering the streets of San Francisco like a bemused alien. He suggests a skinny kid wearing the castoffs of a previous generation—baggy suit, battered fedora—and seems determined to appear out of place and out of time. And we hear his comments on the passing scene: derisive wisecracks delivered in the get-this tone of a cynical teenager. When he sits down to draw, filling the pages with vivid caricatures of street people, all the elements of his outsider's personality seem to come together: the drawings are grotesque but startlingly accurate—the products of a savagely objective comic eye. It's exhilarating to watch Crumb at work and bracing to listen to his jaundiced riffs on the venality and the cheesiness of contemporary American society. Well-edited montages of his famous sixties comics—featuring Fritz the Cat, Mr. Natural, and a host of drooling, bulbous, drug-addled freaks—demonstrate that his irreverence is admirably thorough and consistent: he was as rough on the inanities of the counterculture as he is now on the hypocrisies of corporate culture.

Zwigoff does full justice to the corrosive beauty of Crumb's style. The movie often makes you laugh out loud, and laughter is the ultimate means of persuasion. "Crumb" includes occasional sound bites from expert talking heads: Robert Hughes, appearing for the defense, compares the artist to Brueghel; the prosecutors, Deirdre English (a magazine editor) and Trina Robbins (a cartoonist), accuse Crumb of being a racist, a sexist, and a pornographer. Nothing they say about the work is decisive, or even memorable: all that matters is whether or not you find Crumb's art funny. But comedy, as Steve Martin said, isn't pretty. As "Crumb" goes along, and we learn more and more about the subject's family, the picture's mood turns melancholy and unsettling, because we begin to realize that Crumb's gift—the detachment that allows him to create such hilariously contemptuous images of the world around him (and inside him)—is also a kind of curse, or, at least, a nasty habit.

In the movie's most unnerving scenes, the artist visits his older brother, Charles, who lives, with their mother, in Philadelphia, and his younger brother, Maxon, who lives alone in a fleabag hotel in San Francisco. Robert's response to their unhappy tales is bizarre. Charles is a gentle, puffy-faced recluse, with a disarmingly quick wit (directed mostly at himself); as he tells Robert about his suicide attempts, apologizes for the effects of his antidepressant medications, recalls

THE HARBOR

This harbor was made by art and force
and called Kingstown and afterward Dun Laoghaire
and holds the sea behind its barrier
less than five miles from my house.

City of shadows and of the gradual
capitulations to the last invader,
this is the final one: signed in water
and witnessed in granite and ugly bronze and gunmetal.

Lord be with us say the makers of a nation.
Lord look down say the builders of a harbor.
They came and cut a shape out of ocean
and left stone to close around their labor.

Officers and their wives promenaded
on this spot once and saw with their own eyes
the opulent horizon and obedient skies
which nine-tenths of the law provided.

Frigates with thirty-six guns cruising
the outer edges of influence could idle
and enter here and catch the tide of
arrogance and empire and the Irish Sea rising

and rising through a century of storms
and cormorants and moonlight all along this coast
while an empire forgot an ocean and the armed
ships under it changed to salt and rust:

a seagull with blue and white and gray feathers
swoops down and rolls and finishes
its flight overhead and vanishes—
its colors stolen where the twilight gathers.

—Eavan Boland

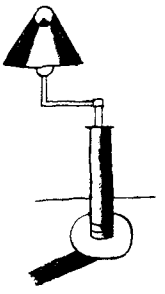
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the humiliations of his youth, and describes the dreary solitude of his present life, Robert maintains a fixed, nervous grin and punctuates his brother's remarks with jokes and snorts of laughter. He reacts the same way to Maxon, who is, if anything, more screwed up than Charles: Maxon has a history of molesting women, and he attempts to calm his inner demons by unusual means, like meditating on a bed of nails. Watching Robert with his brothers and, briefly, with his mother, you can see him removing himself from these uncomfortable situations, and trying, rather desperately, to find the humor in all that pain. You see, in a way, the same qualities that Crumb brings to his comics, and in real life they seem pitifully inadequate, and even chilling.

Zwigoff doesn't judge Crumb, though. The artist's detachment may appear to verge on the inhuman, but there's no doubt that it's an effective survival tactic; the movie shows in devastating detail what the young Robert had to detach himself *from*, and how much more successful than his brothers he has been in fighting off the worst consequences of the domestic horror. The hero of "Crumb" is both a courageous resister and a shell-shocked casualty of his family's emotional wars, and Zwigoff's portrait carefully preserves that ambiguity. "Crumb" leaves us with a mystery, a question that begins to vibrate in the mind as we watch the van pull out, removing Robert from America and from the lives of Charles and Maxon and his mother: How far away does an artist have to go before he can see the world clearly, and is there anyone else out there? Crumb has a wife and a young daughter, but he freely admits that, with the exception of his daughter, he has never loved anyone. There's something frightening about great comedy, and "Crumb" explores the sources of that terror without presuming to explain them. The movie looks at the void, the void looks back, and they laugh in mutual recognition. That eerie sound follows you all the way home.

"KISS OF DEATH," directed by Barbet Schroeder from a screenplay by Richard Price, is a workmanlike remake of the 1947 crime melodrama about the perils of a small-time New York crook who becomes a stool pigeon. The original, which was written by Ben Hecht and Charles Lederer and directed by Henry Hathaway, was one of the earliest, and best, examples of Hollywood's postwar style for urban thrillers: the movie borrowed the matter-of-fact naturalism of newsreels, using real locations instead of scrupulously lit studio sets. There's nothing like seeing things as they are for the first time. Watching that movie now, you can still feel the thrill of discovery: the city streets look fresh and beautiful; they're charged with possibility. When the first "Kiss of Death" opened, James Agee wrote, "Apparently if good technicians pay careful attention to the actual world, they can hardly help turning out a movie that is worth seeing." You can't say that anymore. Location shooting has been for several decades a firmly established convention of action-movie technique; gritty urban realism just isn't what it used to be. The new "Kiss of Death" opens with a technically spectacular pan over a Queens neighborhood near Shea Stadium—one that has probably never been filmed by a big-budget movie crew before. Even this virgin territory evokes an overpowering sense of déjà vu.

Almost everything about this "Kiss of Death" produces a similar reaction. It's a well-made and reasonably absorbing picture, and, in a way, its low-key realism is refreshing: the film doesn't have the jittery, hard-sell quality that makes most action movies unendurable. But it suffers from a stubborn sort of purposelessness, a flu-like lethargy that can no longer be cured by regular injections of atmospheric mean-streets naturalism. David Caruso, as the sensitive squealer Jimmy Kilmartin, seems to be playing an imperceptibly subtle variation on his sensitive-cop character from "NYPD Blue," and the actor's unpretentious competence is somehow ideally suited to the movie's over-all air of weary professionalism.



Although "Kiss of Death" is full of wonderful actors—among them Helen Hunt, Samuel L. Jackson, and Stanley Tucci—and they all do skillful work, the movie's only real energy comes from Nicolas Cage, who plays the chief bad guy, a gangster called Little Junior. Cage doesn't try to compete with the giggling sadism of the earlier film's villain, Tommy Udo (Richard Widmark), and the filmmakers, to their credit, haven't asked him to; there's no counterpart, for example, of the original's most famous scene, in which Udo pushes an old woman in a wheelchair down a flight of stairs. Widmark's performance is all psychotic grins and abrupt, high-pitched cackles of delight in mayhem. Cage's manner is grave and quiet; Little Junior's murderousness is far less gleeful than Udo's but just as alarming. This character goes about his violent business with an almost impersonal efficiency: when he punches a man in the face, his fist pumps as hard and as evenly as a piston. He isn't a rabid killer, like Udo; Little Junior—who has inherited the criminal responsibilities of his father, Big Junior—is more like an animal that's simply doing what it has been bred and trained to do. As Cage plays him, he's as innocent as a Rottweiler.

When Cage is on the screen, the movie flickers to life. He's a remarkably original actor: he has the unusual ability to play simple characters complexly and without condescension. Watching him, you always sense that, from beneath the drooping eyelids, his characters are seeing the world a little more narrowly than other people do, focussing everything in a tunnel-like intensity of belief. Little Junior is a monster, but there's something rather touching about his dedication to evil, his unwavering adherence to the laws of the urban jungle. He's a striver: a fitness freak and a positive thinker. (He's very proud of the acronym by which he defines himself: BAD, which stands for Balls, Attitude, and Direction.) Little Junior is so unsophisticated that when Jimmy offhandedly quotes the cliché "Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger" the thug looks thunderstruck, as if he had never heard such an extraordinary piece of wisdom. Sincerely impressed, he whispers, "I like that," and it's one of the great, characteristic Nicolas Cage moments—a sudden, sharp, sweetly funny revelation of a sensibility that isn't broad but is unexpectedly deep. In his scenes, Cage gives "Kiss of Death" the wide-awake clarity that movie audiences once found in the sight of sunlight on asphalt. ♦

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IRONBOUND

A bio-pic goes to the lurid heart of the Mike Tyson story.

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

With the exception of Martin Scorsese's existential "Raging Bull," which was staged like a sado-mazzy psychodrama, boxing films all tend to come out of the same old lunch bucket. They're morality plays with primitive footwork. As the critic Manny Farber once observed, most fight films ignore the feeling-out process of a boxing match, the subtle psyching and tentative pats: "Whereas real fighters actually hit each other about one-sixth of the time, the fearless 'phenoms' of the cinema are hitting every second—and never anywhere but flush on the chin or in the stomach." Farber was referring to gritty fight films of the forties, like "Champion" and "The Set-Up," but ever since Sylvester Stallone's "Rocky" series the formula has been steroid-injected. The boxers, once lanky and pale, are now bronzed beefcake; the sound of the blows is amplified to create a submarine effect; the excruciating slow-motion shots make the payoff punch look like the hand of fate thrown from deep space. The championship match becomes a day of reckoning between two rock-'em, sock-'em robots. But beneath this barrage lumbers the simple morality tale about leaden men gone soft, eaten alive by fame.

HBO Pictures' docudrama "Tyson" (premièring April 29th) doesn't find new ways to move around the ring or apply fresh paint to the jumbled mural of promoters and groupies feeding off the same piece of meat. Its power and interest derive from the rough stuff of the real-life Mike Tyson story. Directed by Uli Edel, who got lost doing "Last Exit to Brooklyn" on the big screen, "Tyson" is based on the former boxer José Torres's book "Fire & Fear: The Inside Story of Mike Tyson." The screenplay, by Robert Johnson, touches on the highlights of Tyson's career and leaves the rest hazy. (Barbara Kopple's 1993 documentary "Fallen Champ" creates a much fuller impression.) A child prodigy in the field of street crime (thirty-eight arrests by the age of thirteen), Tyson escapes the revolving door of the juvenile-justice system when he falls under the spell of Cus D'Amato (George C. Scott, bulging with breakfast cereal), who becomes both his boxing mentor and his surrogate father, adopting Mike after his mother dies. Tyson is split between the Brooklyn 'hood he left behind and the Catskills he calls home. By day, he tends to the pigeon coop he's built (an inevitable echo of Brando); by night, he runs with one of his homeboys. But his internal splits are zipped up tight once he gets into the ring: he's a tank with a one-track mind.

The scenes come chop-chop as Tyson (Michael Jai White) walks through walls on his way to the heavyweight championship of the world. He wins the Junior Olympics in a first-round knockout. Cus dispenses crusty advice. Tyson levels his professional opponents. Cus develops an ominous cough. Tyson clears more chump fodder. Cus coughs deeper into his handkerchief and then, off camera, dies. Without Cus's protective custody, Tyson is vulture bait. Don King (Paul Winfield), the boxing promoter and convicted felon with light-socket hair, begins to hover and sow discord. Tyson alternates between crying over the loss of Cus and wearing the hard glare of gangsta attitude. One day, while channel-surfing, he spots a fine black sister in a sitcom and works up the nerve to phone her. "To what do I owe the pleasure of this call, Mr. Mike Tyson?" the actress asks, sounding as if her whole body were beginning to purr.

Once Robin Givens (Kristen Wilson) and her mother, Ruth Roper (Sheila Wills), sink their pearly teeth and polished nails into Tyson, the telefilm receives a needed jolt of soap-opera malice.

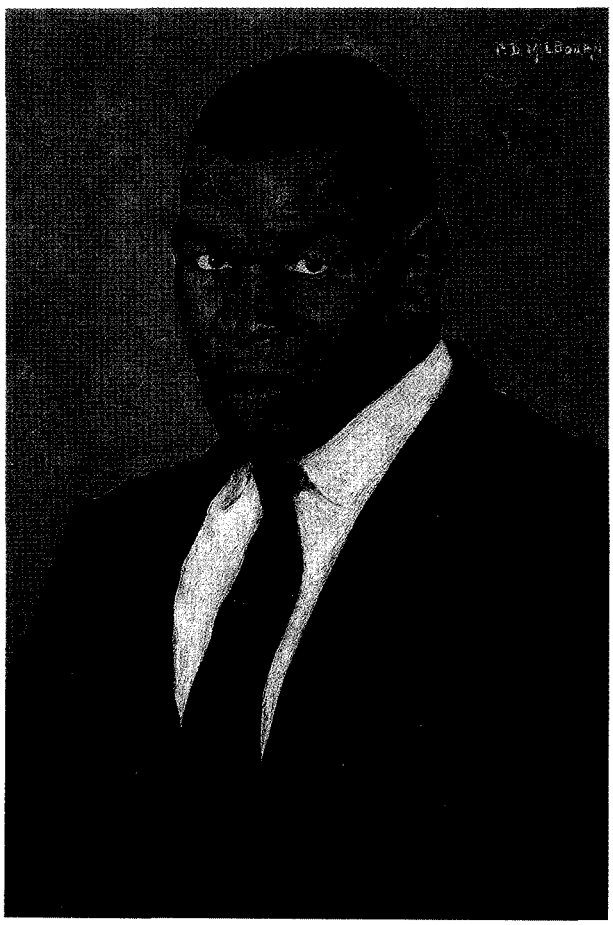
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We watch these tag-team witches execute their own version of rope-a-dope. The movie doesn't flinch from claiming that Givens tricked Tyson into marrying her by lying about being pregnant and then faking a miscarriage. (Winfield's King also scoffs at Givens's claims that she attended Harvard Medical School and was a top Ford model: "I am skeptical up the receptacle.") There's a funny restaging of the Tyson-Givens interview with Barbara Walters, in which Givens—whom the Walters sound-alike calls "Wobbin"—describes the "pure hell" of living with Mike, coping with his manic-depression and violent tantrums, while he sits placidly next to her on the couch. Givens files for divorce after Tyson tosses her and her mother out of the mansion, a scene that begins with her shouting "I have *not* been fucking Donald Trump!" and ends with him calling her a word that rhymes with "blunt." An amused Don King tells Tyson that that bit of language is going to cost him big in his divorce battle. "Mike," he says, "for future reference: Never, under any circumstances, call a colored woman the 'c' word."

Sex organs are the metaphorical war zone in "Tyson." In Tyson's world, there's no worse slur than to be mocked as a woman or a sissy. "So who's the biggest pussy, Mike, you or Robin?" a low-life boxer heckles him. The scariest sequence in the film is when the trainer Kevin Rooney (Clark Gregg) tells Tyson in the gym that he's being taken up the butt by his trampy wife and "Mommie Fuckin' Dearest," whereupon Tyson proceeds to reëstablish his top-dog authority by taunting, belittling, and damn near decapitating his sparring partners one by one. From other sources, we know that Tyson's desire to punish extended to the world outside the ring. He reportedly boasted that the best punch he ever threw was the one that bounced Givens off the wall. Torres's book was far more explicit than this adaptation is in indicating that Tyson also liked to hurt women during sex. The machismo of the street fighter's psyche, and the suppressed fear of being considered a punk, apparently compelled Tyson to violence. An F.B.I. behavioral specialist has characterized Tyson as a "power-reassurance rapist"—someone who overpowers others to prove to himself that he's still The Man. Tyson, who had been mocked his entire life for his effeminate lisp, had a storehouse of anger to unload.

In 1991, Tyson did some promotion for the Miss Black America pageant in Indianapolis. He was reportedly grabby with a number of women (the pageant's director later called him a "serial buttocks fondler") but was especially keen on a petite contestant named Desiree Washington (Rebekah Johnson), whom he phoned late one night and invited out on a date. They ended up in Tyson's hotel room, where they had sex, which she said was coerced and he said was consensual. Tyson was arrested, convicted on one count of rape and two counts of deviate sexual conduct, and sentenced to six years. Although the conviction was applauded at the time, revisionists have grumbled that Tyson got a raw deal in court, and that his raw deal was symptomatic of a larger crackdown on black men who get too problematic for the white power structure. George C. Scott has said that he believes Tyson was "railroaded," and Robert Wright, in *The New Republic*, argues that Tyson was "wrongly convicted," though he concedes that Tyson "probably raped her." My own take is that Tyson probably raped her and was rightly convicted. The special prosecutor J. Gregory Garrison convinced the jury of Tyson's guilt, and "Heavy Justice," his absorbing account of the case, persuaded me.

But, whatever your view, I don't think you can shirk the controversies of the case, which is what "Tyson" does. The date with Desiree Washington and its consequences are telescoped into a symbolic coda. (A flock of birds representing the-freedom-Tyson-has-lost flies overhead.) With this understated fadeaway, the film makes Tyson's downfall seem inevitable and yet somehow incidental, as if he had hit an air pocket and just happened to land in the defendant's chair. "I don't know that we wanted to sit in judgment," Ross Greenburg, one of the film's co-executive producers, explained to the press—but, hey, that's your job. Why make the movie? After you've shown Tyson and Givens having sex in the back of a limo, it's a little late to go elliptical on us. And "Tyson" 's reluctance to lay its convictions on the line keeps its characterization of Tyson himself at a remove. Iron Mike becomes ironed Mike—a permanent man-child, a boxing poster with no inner life, who shows none of the huggy affection he does in the most unguarded moments of Kopple's "Fallen Champ." The tragedy of the black man in America remains that he is perceived not as a life-size figure of humanity but as a moody archetype of animal and shadow, all appetite. It's a testament to the sullen, wary pride of Michael Jai White's performance that when Tyson gets floored by Buster Douglas in Japan, and, sprawled on the canvas, fumbles for his mouth guard, you feel a true pang of sympathy. You pity Mike Tyson; there's no pleasure seeing this bully brought down like a broken machine. It's a moment when movie technique rises above trickery and provides an expressive power beyond the reach of even the best journalism. ♦



PATRICK D. MILBOURN

Mike Tyson: a tank with a one-track mind.

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DESIGNING MEN

BY WENDY WASSERSTEIN

MIKE BRADY, the "Brady Bunch" dad, is a guy with principles and bell-bottom trousers. He's an architect who built his own kind of house, and he has his own kind of retro family values. If he were a crooner, he'd be belting nightly an Our Gang version of "My Way" at the Sears, Roebuck bar-and-grill. Mike Brady, much like Gary Cooper as the classic cinema architect Howard Roark in "The Fountainhead," is willing to stand up for his beliefs and manly enough to follow through.

But Mike is a sensitive guy, too. He reads "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" in bed, and is a caring husband and a loving dad. He even has artistic integrity. In "The Brady Bunch Movie" his designs consistently bear more than a passing resemblance to "77 Sunset Strip," but he doesn't budge from his vision. Mike's split-level gas station is his Robie House.

Of course, Mike isn't the only sensitive but wholly hetero hero who has appeared on the silver screen lately. In fact, architects are the movie men of the moment—the perfect combo of the old male and the new. Movie architects wear T-shirts and jeans and have unstructured, Dolce & Gabbana or Banana Republic silhouettes, but they are quite capable of holding their own with prominent men in business suits. They're artists who have no problem with numbers. Developers are evil movie bad guys, willing to throw over the environment just for a condo. But architects, though initially cool and withholding, are on the side of good.

Movie architects tend to be hunky and tall, like Gary Cooper, and unlike the real-life shortish greats—Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis I. Kahn, and I. M. Pei. Among the recent crop onscreen were the sweet and widowed Tom Hanks, in "Sleepless in Seattle"; the befuddled but secretly sweet Woody Harrelson, in "Indecent Proposal"; and Jeff Bridges, the Good Samaritan plane-crash survivor, in "Fearless." When Bridges lets the husband of a distressed fellow-survivor know that he's an architect, the husband is reassured of his seriousness.



IT takes a real man to romance a Romanesque curve. Richard Gere, in "Intersection," plays an architect trapped at a midlife crossroads between Sharon Stone, his coolly elegant wife, and Lolita Davidovich, his wilder, younger journalist lover. Tom Selleck, in "Three Men and a Baby," is an architect so secure in his masculinity that he bonds adorably with his baby girl by bringing her to a building site in a small pink hard hat. It's a detail she might well mention to her therapist—along with the three men—in the future.

Until recently, film architects, like cowboys, had no ethnic affiliation. Sam Waterston, in "Hannah and Her Sisters," is from the innovative and socially agile school of Robert A. M. Stern, Hugh Hardy, and Charles Gwathmey—the ultimate gentleman architect, well versed in opera and the Flatiron District. In more recent films, the education and vita are the same but the background is more diverse: Wesley Snipes, for example, plays an architect trapped by his classical and classist taste, in Spike Lee's interracial romance, "Jungle Fever." The current champion of architect casting, David Strathairn, plays the overworked—and possibly Jewish or at least not totally Waspy—architect husband of Jessica Lange in "Losing Isaiah" and of Meryl Streep in "The River Wild." (Obviously, architects prefer blondes.)

Of course, there are other sensitive but masculine film vocations: James Woods is a veterinarian in "Immediate Family," and Burt Reynolds is a sculptor in "The Man Who Loved Women." But to someone scanning the possibilities for attractive new-male careers, a book editor seems too intellectual, a film director too autocratic, a doctor too open to malpractice, an investment banker too "eighties," a talent agent too scuzzy, a personal trainer too Fabio, a lawyer too big a prenuptial, a congressman too Republican to pair with the likes of Jessica or Meryl, and a college professor too low-salaried, too politically correct, and maybe even too potentially gay.

"A building has integrity, just like a man," Howard Roark asserts to his critics. Film architects have the instincts of artists and the responsibilities of real men. They are never élitist, because, bottom line, they care about how we live—about the nitty-gritty, the bathrooms, the kitchen sinks. Most important, metaphorically and concretely, an architect can always "get it up." One wonders what profession holds a similar cinematic metaphor for contemporary females. "Pretty Woman II" is already in the works. ♦

ROBERT RISKO

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THE NEXT PARTY

Pork Satay Appetizers
Slice 2 pounds boneless **pork loin** into thin strips. Stir together 4 minced **garlic cloves**, 1 cup **soy sauce**, 12 ounces **Dijon style mustard** and 1/2 cup **honey**. Save half the sauce for dipping, marinate pork in other half for 30 minutes. Remove strips from marinade, discarding marinade and weave on bamboo skewers. Grill or broil 3-4 minutes. Serve with reserved sauce. Preparation Time: 20 minutes. Makes 16 servings.

Nutrient Information, Approximately, per Serving: Calories: 94, Protein: 13 gm., Fat: 3 gm., Sodium: 354 mg., Cholesterol: 33 mg.

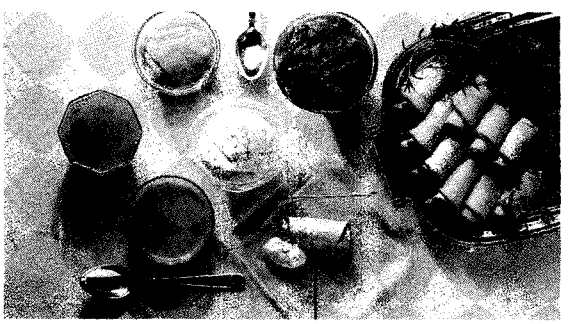
Nutrient analysis done by The Food Processor II Diet Analysis Software. Pork data from USDA Handbook 8-10 (1991).



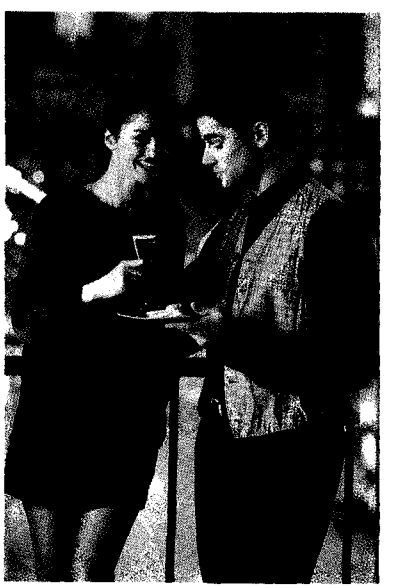
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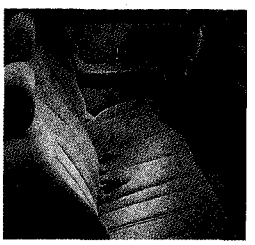
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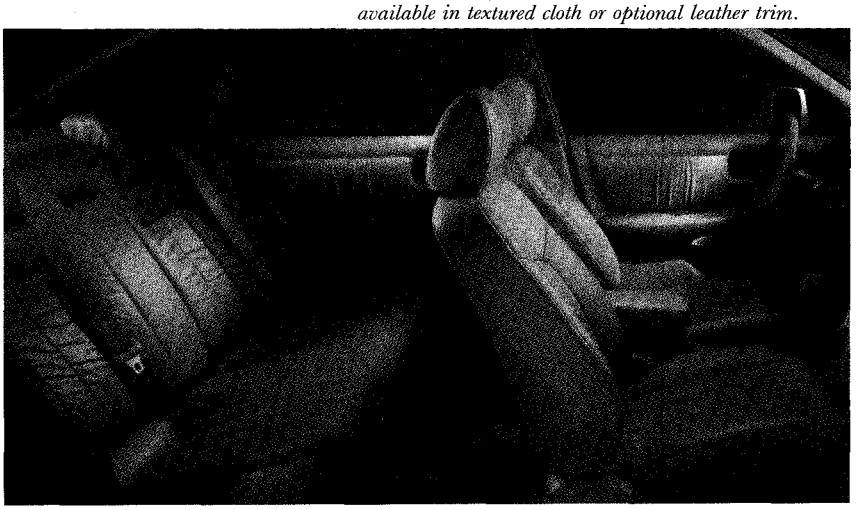


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